

TODDLER: 16 to 36 Months



# Welcome to Ohio's Infant & Toddler Field Guide



## Toddler 16 to 36 Months



Get the Complete Field Guide Online –  
Including These ADDITIONAL Sections:

**Introduction** (Sets the stage for understanding and using the Field Guide)

- What is the Field Guide
- Using the Field Guide
- Details of Vignette Layout
- Acknowledgments
- Glossary
- Library of Resources
- References
- Vignette Table of Contents
- “More About” Listing
- Out of the Mouths of Babes
- Create Your Own Vignette



**Infant Vignettes (Birth to 8 Months)**

**Mobile Infant Vignettes (6 to 18 Months)**



Visit [www.occrra.org](http://www.occrra.org) to download any and all sections  
of the Infant & Toddler Field Guide.



### What's Inside

These vignettes capture a moment in time in child care programs based on real-life challenges. The vignettes enable you to “see” and “hear” children and care teachers during play, learning, and caregiving routines and the interactions involved. After reading a vignette, the reader walks through a series of questions and possible teaching strategy solutions. These strategies are then woven into a final “Putting It All Together” vignette depicting a more developmentally appropriate child-teacher encounter.

- Vignette Table of Contents
- Details of Vignette Layout
- Toddler Vignettes (16 to 36 Months)

### Create Your Own Vignette

Do you have a real-life situation that you would like to address? The “Create Your Own Vignette” Template provides you with the opportunity by taking you through the “Watch,” “Ask Yourself/Give It a Try” and “Putting It All Together” process. You can create questions, strategies and possible resolutions by using the blank vignette template found in the Field Guide Introduction Section.



## Vignette Table of Contents

In each vignette you can “see” and “hear” toddlers and their care teachers in action. Choose a vignette topic and turn to the page in the Toddler section that you want to explore.

Vignette Title	Page
Crying...Upon Arrival	T-7
Crying...Throughout the Day	T-11
Crying...For No Obvious Reason	T-15
Crying...Everyone at the Same Time	T-19
Into Everything...They Aren't Supposed to Be	T-23
Into Everything...As They Roam Around the Room	T-27
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So Aggressive...With Others	T-35
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Mouthing	T-43
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Vignette Title	Page
Biting...How to Stop It	T-67
Biting...Talking with Families	T-71
Why Won't They...Participate in Group Time?	T-75
Why Won't They...Stay on Their Cots at Nap Time?	T-79
Why Won't They...Follow Directions?	T-83
Why Won't They...Keep Materials Where They Belong?	T-87
Getting Ready for Preschool...Too Much to Do	T-91
Getting Ready for Preschool...Can't Play Anymore	T-95
Getting Ready for Preschool...Families Expect Me to Teach	T-99
I Know I Should...Keep Toys, Activity Areas Open All Day	T-103
I Know I Should...Go Outside More Often	T-107
I Know I Should...Offer Creative Arts	T-111
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I Know I Should...Serve Meals Family Style	T-123

**Note:** The vignette titles capture what care teachers commonly “say” or “ask” about specific topics. It is important to note that the titles may not be stating what teachers should do. You will need to read the vignette, questions and essential practices to understand how the title plays out in the vignette and what appropriate professional practices are implemented.

### Want to Explore the Infant and Mobile Infant Vignettes?

Download these age sections at [www.occrra.org](http://www.occrra.org).

#### Age Group: Infant: Birth to 8 Months

Vignette Title	Page
Crying...Upon Arrival	I-7
Crying...Throughout the Day	I-11
Crying...For No Obvious Reason	I-15
Crying...Everyone at the Same Time	I-19
Into Everything...As They Roam Around the Room	I-23
So Aggressive...With Others	I-27
Mouthing	I-31

Vignette Title	Page
Biting...How to Stop It	I-35
Biting...Talking with Families	I-39
I Know I Should...Keep Toys, Activity Areas Open All Day	I-43
I Know I Should...Go Outside More Often	I-47
I Know I Should...Implement Primary Caregiving	I-51
I Know I Should...Individualize Routines	I-55

(Continued on next page)

**Age Group: Mobile Infant: 6 to 18 Months** .....

Vignette Title	Page
Crying...Upon Arrival	M-7
Crying...Throughout the Day	M-11
Crying...For No Obvious Reason	M-15
Crying...Everyone at the Same Time	M-19
Into Everything...They Aren't Supposed to Be	M-23
Into Everything...As They Roam Around the Room	M-27
Into Everything...Tearing Things Off of the Wall	M-31
So Aggressive...With Others	M-35
So Aggressive...With Things	M-39
Mouthing	M-43
Dumping	M-47
Tantrumming	M-51
Running	M-55

Vignette Title	Page
Climbing	M-59
Throwing	M-63
Biting...How to Stop It	M-67
Biting...Talking with Families	M-71
Why Won't They...Participate in Group Time?	M-75
Why Won't They...Stay on Their Cots at Nap Time?	M-79
Why Won't They...Follow Directions?	M-83
Why Won't They...Keep Materials Where They Belong?	M-87
I Know I Should...Keep Toys, Activity Areas Open All Day	M-91
I Know I Should...Go Outside More Often	M-95
I Know I Should...Offer Creative Arts	M-99
I Know I Should...Implement Primary Caregiving	M-103
I Know I Should...Individualize Routines	M-107

**Some Vignette Topics Are Not Available for Certain Age Groups**

While a majority of topics are presented in each of the three age groups, there are a few topics that are not. Some topics are not suitable for the age group represented, due either to the developmental stages of children or the appropriateness of the experience. For example, there are no vignettes on “Getting Them Ready for Preschool” for the infant and mobile infant age groups since directed school readiness activities are inappropriate for this age group.

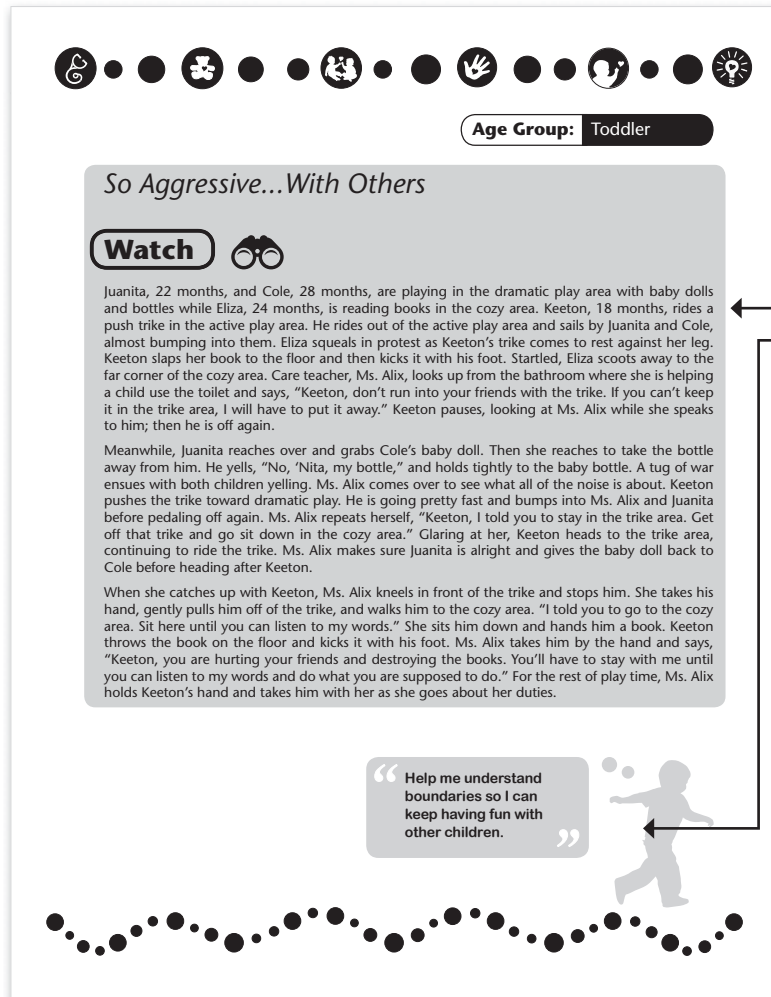
**Use of Screen Time (TV/DVD/Video/Computer)**

Hands-on opportunities in appropriate environments require children to use their sense of smell, touch, sight, hearing, and sometimes taste. These opportunities also involve the use of motor, cognitive, and emotional skills and often language and social skills, which are not utilized in passive screen time activities.

For this reason and following the national recommendations and the guidelines set by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the use of TVs/DVDs/videos/computers is not appropriate for children under the age of 24 months in any circumstance. It is best practice, and the Field Guide's recommendation, not to use any screen time experiences with children under the age of 36 months.

Each vignette is laid out similarly. Understanding each section will help you get the most out of the Field Guide.

## What You'll Find on Page 1 of Each Vignette



### Watch

"Watch," the initial vignette, sets up an example of a real-life situation that a care teacher may experience. The care teacher's professional practices illustrated in the "Watch" vignette are not "wrong" but rather are practices that could be strengthened.

### Child's Quote

The child's quote on the "Watch" page is "Out of the Mouth of Babies." The child is telling the reader what her needs are based on the ideas portrayed in the vignette. The development team titled this piece "One Thing Right Now"; the one thing we would like the reader to consider right now.

## What You'll Find on Page 2 of Each Vignette

### Watch



Juanita, 22 months, and Cole, 28 months, are playing in the dramatic play area with baby dolls and bottles while Eliza, 24 months, is reading books in the cozy area. Keeton, 18 months, rides a push trike in the active play area. He rides out of the active play area and sails by Juanita and Cole, almost bumping into them. Eliza squeals in protest as Keeton's trike comes to rest against her leg. Keeton slaps her book to the floor and then kicks it with his foot. Startled, Eliza scoots away to the far corner of the cozy area. Care teacher, Ms. Alix, looks up from the bathroom where she is helping a child use the toilet and says, "Keeton, don't run into your friends with the trike. If you can't keep it in the trike area, I will have to put it away." Keeton pauses, looking at Ms. Alix while she speaks to him; then he is off again.

Meanwhile, Juanita reaches over and grabs Cole's baby doll. Then she reaches to take the bottle away from him. He yells, "No, 'Nita, my bottle," and holds tightly to the baby bottle. A tug of war ensues with both children yelling. Ms. Alix comes over to see what all of the noise is about. Keeton pushes the trike toward dramatic play. He is going pretty fast and bumps into Ms. Alix and Juanita before pedaling off again. Ms. Alix repeats herself, "Keeton, I told you to stay in the trike area. Get off that trike and go sit down in the cozy area." Glaring at her, Keeton heads to the trike area, continuing to ride the trike. Ms. Alix makes sure Juanita is alright and gives the baby doll back to Cole before heading after Keeton.

When she catches up with Keeton, Ms. Alix kneels in front of the trike and stops him. She takes his hand, gently pulls him off of the trike, and walks him to the cozy area. "I told you to go to the cozy area. Sit here until you can listen to my words." She sits him down and hands him a book. Keeton throws the book on the floor and kicks it with his foot. Ms. Alix takes him by the hand and says, "Keeton, you are hurting your friends and destroying the books. You'll have to stay with me until you can listen to my words and do what you are supposed to do." For the rest of play time, Ms. Alix holds Keeton's hand and takes him with her as she goes about her duties.

### more about... impulse control

Impulse control is an essential part of a child's developing emotion regulation and self-regulation. It starts developing in infancy and continues throughout the preschool years. A child in the process of learning impulse control can be challenging for an adult. A young toddler may only occasionally comply with a teacher's expectations. An older toddler is likely to express understanding of some boundaries, but may not yet have developed enough self-control to attend to them consistently. Being patient with the learning process is key. With appropriate supervision, guidance, and support from responsive care teachers, young children will begin to learn simple strategies to help themselves regulate their behavior.

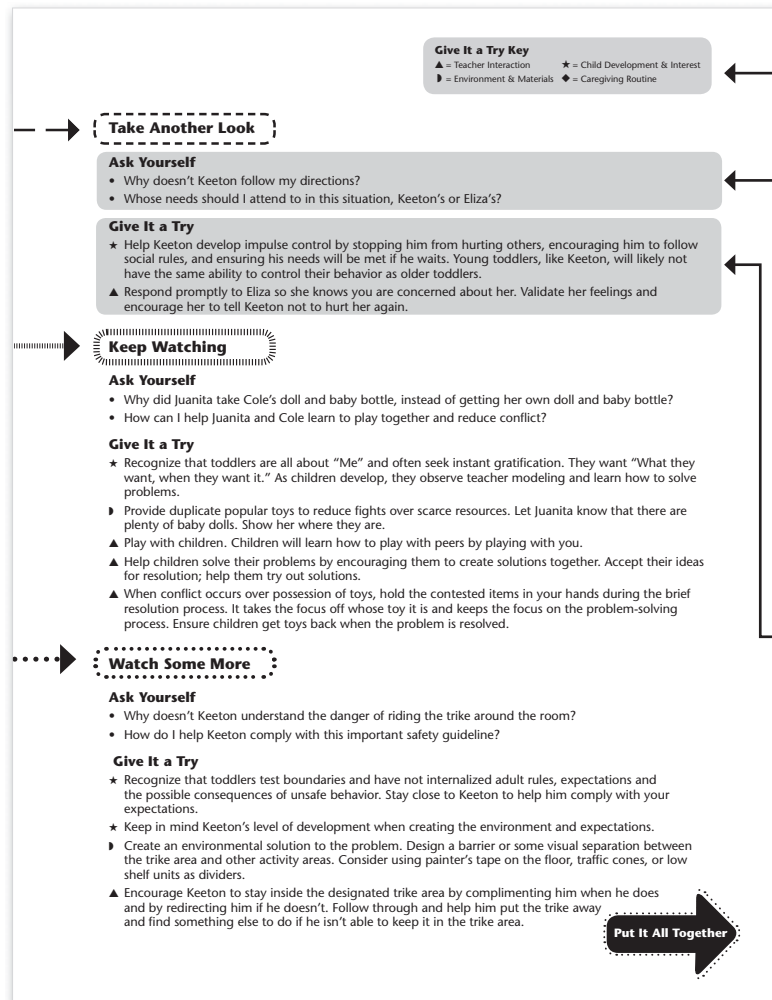
### Watch

The "Watch" vignette is presented again so readers can drill down, "observe" and focus on what the child is experiencing. Revisiting the "scene" helps readers more clearly identify and clarify what is happening in the vignette. This can lead to a deeper understanding of the connection between interactions, environment, development and behaviors. The "Watch" vignette directly links to the next section found on page 3 of each vignette, "Ask Yourself/Give It a Try."

### More About...

The "More About" paragraph expands on the vignette's content or a closely related topic. The "More About" provides additional insights and points to ponder. See pages Intro 16-17 for a complete listing of "More About" topics.

## What You'll Find on Page 3 of Each Vignette



### Give It a Try Key:

The bullet point icons identify the "Give It a Try" professional practices that refer to teacher interaction (▲), environment & materials (▮), child development & interest (★) and caregiving routine (◆).

### Ask Yourself

The "Ask Yourself" questions, written in the reader's voice, align to specific paragraphs in the "Watch" vignette. This enables you to consider questions that directly relate to child behaviors and professional practices. This approach of reviewing a scenario and asking questions is part of the reflective process.

### Give It a Try

"Give It a Try" presents possibilities to strengthen your professional practices, increase your knowledge and to reflect on your ideas and beliefs. Be open to trying new ideas and seeing what works and what doesn't. The suggested professional practices are options and do not represent a complete list. They do, however, illustrate essential professional practices that support the provision of relationship-based care that is responsive, respectful and reciprocal.

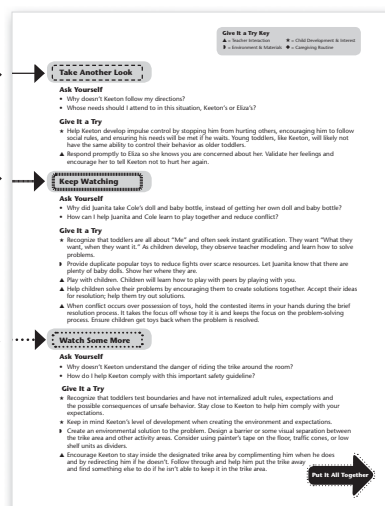
The "Ask Yourself/Give It a Try" strategy is based on The Program for Infant/Toddler Care's Watch, Ask, and Adapt; a process that utilizes the skills of observation, reflection and application to support care teaching.

### "Take Another Look"

### "Keep Watching"

### "Watch Some More"

Each of these sections refers to specific paragraphs in the "Watch" vignette designated by distinct arrows. Depending on content, some vignettes may not have a "Watch Some More" section.





# Details of Vignette Layout

## What You'll Find on Page 4 of Each Vignette

**Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action**

Juanita, 22 months, and Cole, 28 months, are playing in the dramatic play area with baby dolls while Eliza, 24 months, is reading in the cozy area. Keeton, 18 months, rides a push trike in the trike area. He rides out of the active play area and sails by Juanita and Cole, almost bumping into them. He turns, riding into the cozy area where Eliza squeals as the trike comes to rest against her leg. Keeton slaps the book she is reading out of her hand. Startled by his response, Eliza scoots to the far corner of the cozy area.

Care teacher, Ms. Alix, looks up and sees Keeton run into Eliza's leg. Eliza tells Ms. Alix, who is comforting her, that Keeton hurt her leg with the trike. Ms. Alix responds, "I'm sorry Keeton hurt you. Let me look at your leg." She notices that Keeton is ready to make another loop. She stops him, calmly saying, "Keeton, please get off the trike and come with me." She leads Keeton over to the cozy area saying, "You hurt Eliza with your trike. I don't allow trikes in the cozy area. Eliza, tell Keeton, "You hurt me; no bikes here." Ms. Alix asks Keeton to pick up the book and return it to Eliza. Eliza takes it and sits down to read.

Meanwhile, Juanita grabs Cole's baby doll and tries to take the baby bottle away from him. He yells, "No, Nita, my bottle," and holds on tightly. A tug of war ensues. Ms. Alix holds out her hands saying, "Let me hold the doll and bottle while we figure out what to do." The children, familiar with Ms. Alix's problem solving strategy, hand them over. She asks what the problem is and listens to both children's descriptions. She restates what she heard. "Juanita grabbed Cole's baby and wanted his baby bottle. Is that right?" Both children nod. Ms. Alix says, "How can we solve this problem?" Cole says, "My doll." Juanita says, "My doll." Ms. Alix points to the doll bed and says, "Look, Juanita, there are more dolls." Ms. Alix says to Cole, "Here is your doll and bottle," and then hands another doll and bottle to Juanita saying, "This is your baby doll."

Keeton zooms by. Ms. Alix gently stops him and takes him to the trike area. She points to the floor where two strips of red tape define the trike area. "You can ride your trike anywhere between the red taped lines. When you ride your trike outside of the red tape, children get hurt. I won't allow that to happen. If you can't keep your trike inside the lines, I'll put it away and help you find another place to play." Keeton looks at Ms. Alix while she speaks to him. He nods and rides off staying inside the red lines. When he rides by her she comments, "Your trike is inside the red tape. Thanks for listening." Keeton beams at her and continues to ride inside the trike area. Ms. Alix stays close to make sure he is able to control the urge to ride outside of the trike area.

## Putting It All Together

The "Putting It All Together" vignette is an expansion of the original "Watch" vignette and shows how the scenario might be different when the practices recommended in the "Ask Yourself" and "Give It a Try" are carried out. Of course, there is not one solution and there are many factors to take into consideration. What we do know is that knowledgeable, responsive, respectful and reciprocal care leads to meaningful, early experiences that last a lifetime.

## Infant & Toddler Guidelines Connections

*Ohio's Infant & Toddler Guidelines* provide definitions and examples of infant and toddler development in six developmental domains from birth to 36 months. Each of the six developmental domains is represented with an icon that relates to the type of development described in the domain.

The Guidelines' icons, in the "Putting It All Together" section, connect a child's behavior/interaction with some of the six developmental domains and the Guidelines' indicator it represents. Though only one to three of the Guidelines' icons are aligned with a behavior in the "Putting It All Together" vignette, more developmental behaviors and connections can be identified throughout.

## The Guidelines' Icons in the Vignette Highlight:

- How children's experiences directly relate to their development.
- How experiences can be intentional and unintentional and still affect development.
- How teachers should take advantage of opportunities and everyday encounters to support children's development; it isn't something extra teachers must do.
- How different developmental domains do not operate separately, but instead are inextricably woven together and are part of every care teaching decision you make.



Physical Health



Emotional Development



Social Development



Motor Development



Language & Communication Development



Cognitive Development





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Crying...Upon Arrival*

### **Watch**



Sergio, 23 months, and his older sister arrive at their child care program with their grandma. As they approach Sergio's classroom, Sergio grabs his grandma's legs and starts to cry. She opens the classroom door and nudges Sergio and his sister into the room.

Ms. Loretta, Sergio's primary care teacher, hears the commotion at the door and looks up from where she is seated on the floor reading books to the toddlers. She cheerfully calls to Sergio and says, "Come on over Sergio, we are reading about bugs and you like bugs." Sergio cries louder and clings to his grandma.

Ms. Loretta walks over to Sergio, greets his grandma and sister, and kneels down to get Sergio's attention. She says in a calm voice, "It is hard to say good-bye to grandma but it is time. She has to take your sister to her classroom. Come with me to the cozy corner and I will read you a book." Sergio shakes his head 'no' and continues to cry. Ms. Loretta says, "I'll help you say good-bye to your grandma." She takes his hand and walks his grandma and sister to the door. As his sister and grandma leave, grandma says, "I'll be back after nap time." Sergio collapses on the floor, continues to cry and scream, and begins to kick his feet.

Wanting him to stop screaming and kicking his feet, Ms. Loretta attempts to pick him up, but this makes Sergio scream louder. Ms. Loretta calmly says, "You're OK. You don't need to cry, she will be back." She lets Sergio remain on the floor, staying nearby to make sure he is safe.

“ I need everyone who cares for me to make a plan and work together to make saying goodbye easier. ”



## Watch



Sergio, 23 months, and his older sister arrive at their child care program with their grandma. As they approach Sergio's classroom, Sergio grabs his grandma's legs and starts to cry. She opens the classroom door and nudges Sergio and his sister into the room.

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Ms. Loretta walks over to Sergio, greets his grandma and sister, and kneels down to get Sergio's attention. She says in a calm voice, "It is hard to say good-bye to grandma but it is time. She has to take your sister to her classroom. Come with me to the cozy corner and I will read you a book." Sergio shakes his head 'no' and continues to cry. Ms. Loretta says, "I'll help you say good-bye to your grandma." She takes his hand and walks his grandma and sister to the door. As his sister and grandma leave, grandma says, "I'll be back after nap time." Sergio collapses on the floor, continues to cry and scream, and begins to kick his feet.

Wanting him to stop screaming and kicking his feet, Ms. Loretta attempts to pick him up, but this makes Sergio scream louder. Ms. Loretta calmly says, "You're OK. You don't need to cry, she will be back." She lets Sergio remain on the floor, staying nearby to make sure he is safe.

*more about...a toddler's arrival*

*Sometimes arrival routines are anything but routine. Toddlers may arrive at the child care setting ready to conquer the world one day and the next day they desire and need the reassurance of their parent, family member or other adult who is their primary caregiver, before taking on the world. A toddler's understanding of separation is more developed than that of a mobile or young infant, and the child's temperament, culture, and family relationships play an important role in the separation process. A toddler who is upset needs time to feel what he is feeling, and needs your support in the process. Your role is to understand and express concern, be empathetic, patient and flexible.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why does Sergio cling to his grandma when he arrives, even though he eventually calms down and is usually content and happy throughout the day?
- What should I do when Sergio and his family first arrive?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that Sergio may be going through a developmental stage where separation is difficult. Also consider that there may be changes in his morning routine before he arrives.
- ★ Clinging to his grandma and crying doesn't necessarily mean that he dislikes his care teacher or the program. Respect his way of expressing his feelings about separating from his family.
- ◆ Warmly greet grandma, Sergio and his sister at the door upon arrival. Warm greetings welcome the family and are the first step in the separation routine.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- What can I do to help Sergio separate from his family?
- How can I help Sergio manage his emotions?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Help families establish consistent and predictable separation and reunion routines. Suggest that they use the same routines daily. Encourage Sergio's grandma to say good-bye to Sergio before leaving. Encourage Sergio to say good-bye, too.
- ◆ Invite the family to stay while the child adjusts. They may not know they are welcomed and encouraged to stay to help the child get ready for the separation.
- ▮ Create a welcoming, comfortable space for arriving families.
- ★ Offer Sergio a way to comfort himself, such as a favorite security item, a family photo, and cuddling in your arms, as the transition unfolds.
- ▲ Act as a secure base for Sergio during transitions by staying close to him, reading his cues, and by responding promptly and sensitively to his discomfort.
- ▲ Be sure to respond empathetically to children in distress. Acknowledge and validate Sergio's feelings. Offer comforting words.

Put It All Together

Toddler 9



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Sergio, 23 months, and his older sister arrive at their child care program with their grandma. Knowing Sergio needs time to adjust when he arrives at his classroom, grandma takes his older sister to her room first. As they approach Sergio's classroom, Sergio grabs his grandma's legs and starts crying. She opens the classroom door and nudges Sergio into the room.

Ms. Loretta, Sergio's primary care teacher, knows that Sergio is having trouble separating from his grandma in the morning. She has made several adaptations to the classroom to help Sergio with the transition. She has rearranged the room so there is a place for his grandma to be with him when they arrive. A small adult-size couch is near the door and there is also a place for grandma to put her personal belongings out of reach of the children. Sergio's favorite book is waiting for him on the couch.

Sergio's grandma and Ms. Loretta have been talking about ways to help Sergio have an easier time transitioning into the classroom. Grandma has agreed to spend a few minutes with Sergio before she leaves. They have also agreed that when grandma is ready to go she will tell Ms. Loretta so she can help Sergio through the transition.

After greeting his grandma, Ms. Loretta kneels down to a crying Sergio. She says in a calm voice, "Good morning, it is good to see you Sergio. Do you and grandma want to read your favorite book before she goes?" Grandma gets comfortable on the couch and a crying Sergio joins her. At his eye level, Ms. Loretta says, "Enjoy your book. When it is time, I will help you say good-bye to your grandma."

While reading the book and cuddling with grandma, he calms and stops crying. Grandma signals to Ms. Loretta that she is ready to go. Ms. Loretta joins the family and asks grandma to give Sergio his blanket and favorite stuffed monkey. Grandma says, "I have to go now. Ms. Loretta will take care of you until I come back after nap time." She kisses him on the forehead, hugs him, says good-bye and leaves. Ms. Loretta says good-bye to grandma as well.

Almost immediately, Sergio begins to cry. Ms. Loretta, sitting with him on the couch, empathizes and warmly says, "It is hard to say good-bye to grandma. Are you crying because you are sad?" Sergio, nodding his head 'yes,' cries harder. Ms. Loretta holds out her arms to comfort him, but he turns away holding his stuffed monkey and throws himself down on the couch cushions. Ms. Loretta gently rubs his back saying, "I will take care of you until grandma picks you up after nap." She continues to rub his back and waits for a couple of minutes watching him. Sergio's crying lessens and he looks in her direction. She takes his cue and asks if he would like to play with his favorite fire truck in the block area. Sniffling, he climbs off the couch and heads toward the blocks, looking back to see if Ms. Loretta is following. She picks up on his cue and joins him by helping him make a road for his fire truck.



### Emotional Development:

The child will express feelings through facial expressions, gestures and sounds.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize his or her own feelings.



### Emotional Development:

The child will manage his or her internal states and feelings, as well as stimulation from the outside world.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Crying...Throughout the Day*

### **Watch**



Since Paige, 28 months, arrived at her child care program this morning, she has been very listless and uninterested in the experiences and materials around her. Now sitting in the book area holding a puppet, she scans the room watching the other children. She selects a book, turning a couple of pages but showing no interest. She begins to whimper then to cry softly. Her care teacher, Ms. Debra, says, "What's the matter, Paige?" Paige doesn't respond but her crying diminishes to whimpering. Ms. Debra returns to what she was doing.

Later in the morning, Paige is wandering around the room, seemingly without purpose. Paige once again begins to weep. Ms. Debra is at the table with three children exploring shells, pinecones, rocks and leaves. She invites Paige to join them. Paige stands next to Ms. Debra then she asks to sit on Ms. Debra's lap. Ms. Debra seats Paige on her lap and hands her a leaf. Paige begins to whimper. Ms. Debra kindly says, "Paige, you are crying a lot today. What is wrong?" She checks her forehead to see if she has a temperature and decides she doesn't.

After lunch time, Paige starts crying again. Ms. Debra compassionately says to Paige, "Are you tired? I'm getting the cots out now." She helps Paige get comfortable on her cot then assists other children. Paige silently weeps until she falls asleep.

While the children sleep, Ms. Debra calls Paige's mom, Mrs. Metz, at work to see if she can offer some insight into why Paige is so weepy today. She gets a voice recording that she is traveling and can't be reached. Ms. Debra recognizes that this could be the cause of Paige's distress and will ask Mr. Metz when he picks up Paige tonight.

“Knowing why I am sad  
will help you know  
how to care for me.”



## Watch



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## more about...attachment

*Infants' and toddlers' foundation for development is the secure relationships they develop with their parent(s) and care teachers. This secure relationship is referred to as an attachment. Attachment is the process of affection, bonding and connectedness between an infant and toddler and a significant care teacher or parent that builds a sense of trust and security within the child. It profoundly affects all areas of development. Studies on attachment show that children who are in emotionally secure relationships early in life are more likely to be self-confident and socially competent. Sensitive care teachers who read the children's cues and meet emotional and physical needs help each child become securely attached to them – which benefits the child in so many ways!*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- What could be bothering Paige?
- What can I do to comfort Paige?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Conduct a brief health assessment to determine if Paige has any symptoms of illness or injury.
- ★ Review Paige's daily sheet for information her family may have provided that might be helpful in figuring out why Paige is listless and weepy.
- ◆ Check with Paige to find out if she is hungry, thirsty, or sleepy. Offer her water, a snack, and/or a quiet place to rest.
- ★ Serve as a secure base for Paige when she is upset and crying. Stay nearby, talk to her, and hold her if she wants.
- ▲ Offer Paige her security objects to help her cope with her distress.
- ▲ Help Paige to be comfortable in her surroundings. Invite her to engage in activities or help her settle into the cozy area for quiet time; respect her choices.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I help Paige transition to nap?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Consider a child's typical nap schedule, but also consider the child's experiences that day. Paige may not be sleepy but may want to rest or spend time with her care teacher.
- ◆ Offer comfort and help children relax by sitting with them, rubbing their back, or stroking their hair.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- How can I work with families to ensure I have the information I need to take care of their child?
- What can I do for Paige in this situation?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Talk with families about the importance of sharing information about a child's life at home and current needs and how such information helps you care for their child.
- ◆ Build trusting relationships with families so information sharing may be more comfortable.
- ◆ Set up ways to communicate regularly with families, including daily sheets that ask about changes to home routines, etc.
- ◆ Conduct predictable daily routines for Paige.
- ◆ Ask Paige's parents if they have suggestions on what may help Paige.
- ★ Be patient and understanding. Toddler separation from persons they are attached to is emotionally difficult.

Put It All Together

Toddler 13





## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Ms. Debra sees Mr. Metz and Paige, 28 months, arrive at the child care program. Typically Mrs. Metz brings Paige to the program, so Ms. Debra takes note of the change in routine. Ms. Debra notices that Paige is weeping. After seeing Paige's expression, she greets the family a little more quietly than normal. "Good morning Paige, I am happy to see you. Hi Mr. Metz, this is a nice surprise. Usually I greet Mrs. Metz in the morning." Mr. Metz replies, "Paige's mom is traveling out of town this week for work and Paige is really missing her." Ms. Debra comments, "Oh Paige, you must really miss your mom."

Turning to Mr. Metz, Ms. Debra asks, "Is there anything special you would like me to do to help Paige, or is there anything else I should be aware of?" Mr. Metz says, "Paige brought a new plush bunny her mom gave her before she left and Paige is quite attached to it." Ms. Debra says to Paige, "That is a lovely bunny your mom gave you. Does your bunny want to come and play too?" Ms. Debra holds out her hand. Paige, holding on to her bunny tightly, takes Ms. Debra's hand and says good-bye to her dad. She begins to cry softly. Ms. Debra kneels down and offers Paige comfort.

Once Paige is a little calmer, Ms. Debra asks Paige, "What would you like to do?" Paige scans the room and walks toward the book area. Ms. Debra joins Paige to help her transition into play. Paige looks absently at the books, seeming uninterested. Ms. Debra quietly pulls out three books about families, one of them focusing on mothers and lays them near the other books. Paige chooses the book on mothers and says to Ms. Debra, "You read mommy book." Ms. Debra settles next to Paige and they look at the book.

Ms. Debra says to Paige, "I am going to get out the nature box. We all enjoyed that yesterday. Do you want to come to the table to look at the leaves, rocks and pinecones?" Paige shakes her head "no." Ms. Debra replies, "What are you going to do?" Paige replies, "Read books."

Ms. Debra and three other children are exploring the nature box. Paige, still holding her bunny, soon joins them and asks to sit on Ms. Debra's lap. She is softly weeping. Sitting Paige on her lap, Ms. Debra gently rubs her back and says, "You miss your mom and are sad. Do you want to lie on your cot or do you want to sit with me?" Paige replies, "With you." Ms. Debra moves the nature items closer to Paige in case she decides to join in.

Since Paige is still crying, Ms. Debra decides to do a health assessment to make sure Paige is not showing symptoms of illness or injury. There don't seem to be any health issues.

After lunch time, Paige starts crying again. Ms. Debra says, "Let's get mommy's picture so you can hold her close. I'll get your cot out if you want to rest." Ms. Debra gets the picture and helps Paige settle on her cot. She tells Paige, "I'm going to help your friends get ready for nap and I'll be back to sit with you." Soon Ms. Debra returns and rubs Paige's back and sings her a song. Paige briefly weeps but soon relaxes with Ms. Debra's help and drifts off to sleep.



### Social Development:

The child will form relationships with consistent caregivers.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will demonstrate interest in book reading, story telling and singing and will eventually understand the meaning of basic symbols.



### Emotional Development:

The child will manage his or her internal states and feelings, as well as stimulation from the outside world.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Crying...For No Obvious Reason*

### **Watch**



Xavier, 19 months, is playing in the sandbox at the home of his family child care teacher Ms. Sadie. Victoria, 23 months, approaches Xavier and bumps him off the edge of the sandbox, plopping him into the sand. Xavier screams in protest and then cries as Victoria takes the bucket and shovel he was playing with and starts digging in the sand.

Ms. Sadie, who is helping A.J., 3½ years, climb up the climber, did not see what occurred in the sandbox. Hearing Xavier's scream, she comes over saying, "What happened?" Xavier, leaning over and too upset to respond, goes from screaming to crying. Ms. Sadie, looking back and forth between Xavier and Victoria and seeing nothing wrong, says, "I don't know why you are crying. Here, play with this truck in the sand." Ms. Sadie returns to A.J. Xavier continues to cry as he looks at Victoria playing with his bucket and shovel.

“ If I am upset, it is for a reason. I need your comfort even if you don't know why I'm crying. ”



## Watch



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*more about...expressing emotions* 

*Crying and screaming as well as giggling and clapping with excitement are all ways children express their emotions. As children develop emotionally and socially, gain language and communication skills, and have regular positive interactions with responsive adults, they learn to express their emotions with gestures and words. It is important to remember that children's communications reflect their feelings. For instance, they may be feeling physically uncomfortable, very tired, or they may be sad because their dad has left. Or they may be reacting to something that happened to them. An interaction with another child or even the re-arrangement of a room may make them feel unsettled. There is always a reason a child is expressing an emotion; it is up to care teachers to provide security and comfort and try to understand and be responsive to the children's feelings.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why are Xavier's reactions so intense?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Acknowledge that children's behavior is a reflection of their feelings.
- ★ Recognize that a physical exchange between peers doesn't have to physically hurt for a child to be upset. Take time to understand a child's feelings.
- ★ Consider how Xavier's temperament might be contributing to his responses. Children are born with specific temperaments that affect how they respond and react to situations, people and the environment.
- ★ Learn about temperaments, their characteristics, and effective care teaching strategies that work with
- ▲ different temperaments.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How should I handle a situation I didn't see happen?
- What can I do to resolve the situation?

### Give It a Try

- ▮ Prevent such situations by positioning yourself so you can see all the children. Arrange materials and equipment for easier supervision.
- ▲ Go immediately to Xavier and comfort him. Do a quick assessment to determine if he is hurt or injured. Try to figure out what happened after you comfort Xavier.
- ▲ Help Xavier recover from intense emotions by staying nearby, physically comforting him if he allows, until the emotions are less intense.
- ▲ Provide word labels for Xavier's emotions so he knows you understand how he is feeling. For example, "You sound like you are angry."
- ▲ Explore what happened with Xavier and Victoria, after Xavier calms down, by asking simple questions. For children who haven't developed the verbal skills to express themselves, ask them to show you and point to what happened.
- ▲ Encourage children to solve problems by themselves. If they need additional support, suggest potential solutions and give guidance as the children try them out.
- ▮ Help prevent future problems by placing duplicates of popular toys and materials in the environment. For example, both Xavier and Victoria can have a bucket and a shovel if duplicates are placed in the sandbox.

Put It All Together

Toddler 17



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Xavier, 19 months, is playing in the sandbox at the home of his family child care teacher Ms. Sadie. Victoria, 23 months, approaches Xavier and bumps him off the edge of the sandbox, plopping him into the sand. Xavier screams in protest and then cries as Victoria takes the yellow bucket and shovel he was playing with and starts digging in the sand.

With the environment set up for easy supervision, Ms. Sadie, who is helping A.J., 3½ years, climb up the climber, calls to Xavier, “Xavier, I’ll be right there.” Once A.J. is secure on the climber, Ms. Sadie kneels next to Xavier and rubs his back. Still keeping A.J. in sight she says, “I saw Victoria bump you and take your shovel and bucket. You are very upset.” Xavier nods “yes” still crying. Ms. Sadie gives Xavier a moment to calm himself while she continues to rub his back.

Ms. Sadie, still kneeling beside Xavier, says to Victoria, “Victoria, Xavier is upset; you bumped him and took his bucket and shovel. When he is using them, I want you to find something else to use.” Pointing to the green bucket and shovel and a purple set nearby Ms. Sadie explains, “There are other sets for you to use.” Ms. Sadie decides that making Victoria give the yellow bucket and shovel back to Xavier will probably cause Victoria to react strongly and will worsen the situation. Also, knowing toddlers are not developmentally ready to share materials, she decides that the best strategy is to ask Xavier if he would like to choose another bucket and shovel. She makes a mental note to pay extra attention to Victoria’s participation in peer play, so she can help Victoria have more positive interactions.

Turning to Xavier she asks, “Xavier, do you want to use the green bucket and shovel or the purple?” Xavier says, “Mine,” and reaches for the green set. Stepping back, Ms. Sadie watches to see how the children react and continue their play. She returns to A.J. keeping an eye on Xavier and Victoria’s play. After a couple of minutes, Ms. Sadie notices Victoria reaching for Xavier’s shovel. Ms. Sadie calmly calls to Victoria, “Victoria, that is Xavier’s shovel, you can use the purple one.” Victoria, looking around the sandbox and, though not knowing the color purple, picks up the remaining shovel and looks at Ms. Sadie. Ms. Sadie replies, “Yes, that is the purple one.”



### Emotional Development:

The child will manage his or her internal states and feelings, as well as stimulation from the outside world.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will comprehend the message of another’s communication.



### Social Development:

The child will engage in give-and-take exchanges with an adult.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Crying...Everyone at the Same Time*

### **Watch**



Mr. Mateo and Ms. Christina are outside on the playground with eight toddlers. It is a warm and sunny spring day so the children and teachers are thrilled to be outside in the nice weather. The teachers decide to stay outside longer than usual because the children are enjoying the outdoor time so much. This will mean combining the children into one large group for the transition to lunch and skipping story time, but the teachers decide staying outside in the beautiful weather is worth it.

When the time comes to go inside, the teachers need to rush things a bit to make up for the longer outdoor time. Mr. Mateo and Ms. Christina gather the children and head inside to toilet, wash hands and eat lunch. Several of the children don't want to go; they are really enjoying being outside. Jacinda, 30 months, and Martha, 33 months, start crying as the children are led by the teachers into the classroom.

Ms. Christina has the toddlers wait near the bathroom door and does her best to help the toddlers toilet and wash their hands before sending them to the lunch tables. Mr. Mateo washes his hands and starts preparing for lunch. The toileting and hand washing routines are taking much longer than usual because all the toddlers are going through the routine in one large group as opposed to the two smaller groups they usually work in. The children are having a really hard time waiting by the bathroom. By the time the children get through toileting and hand washing, several more children are crying. Ms. Christina helps the crying children find seats at the tables and then leaves Mr. Mateo to serve the children lunch while she sets up the cots for nap.

Before lunch is over, two children are falling asleep their food untouched. Jacinda and Martha are still crying, and Thomas, 27 months, who is very tired, has started sucking his thumb and whimpering. Ms. Christina helps the children clean up after lunch and go to their cots. Because things were rushed, she didn't have time to put out the children's blankets and security items or the books the children like to look at as they are settling in for nap. She rushes to find these items for the children while Mr. Mateo cleans up the lunch tables.

When all the children are finally quiet and going to sleep, the two exhausted teachers decide to never again stay outside longer than usual.

“It's OK to change our schedule once in awhile, but I like my routine care to stay the same and be predictable.”



## Watch



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## more about...schedules

*Young children need a schedule that is predictable, but flexible enough for teachers to meet the children's individual needs and to take advantage of learning experiences as they happen. A predictable schedule enables children to feel a sense of order, which helps them feel secure. When creating a daily schedule, plan adequate time for routine care (meals, naps, arrivals/departures, toileting, dressing). Routines for infants and toddlers are a main element of their curriculum, so attention to individual needs and ample time to meet those needs are essential. Other components of an appropriate schedule include unhurried time for learning/play experiences, time for transitions, balance of active and quiet times and opportunities for outdoor play twice a day.*



### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How can we take advantage of the nice weather without disrupting the children's routines?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Acknowledge that toddlers rely on routines and the timing of routines, especially those that involve meals, nap and toileting, to have their needs met.
- ★ Recognize that dependable routines and transitions help children regulate their behavior.
- ◆ Avoid any changes to the schedule that impact routine care. You can be more flexible with the schedule during blocks of times for play and learning experiences.
- ◆ Give children information in advance when schedules change. Tell them what will happen and how it will be different.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- What do I need to do to help children manage the impact of the schedule change, even when play and learning time are affected?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Maintain the typical sequence of transitions and routines. Conduct transitions and routines the same way each time.
- ★ Plan, prepare and expect toddlers to react to any schedule changes, even changes in environment and play time.
- ★ Understand that children take their emotional cues from care teachers or other children in circumstances that are unusual or uncertain to them.
- ▲ Stay calm and reassuring. Your pleasant and calm voice tone and non-verbal cues, such as slow, calm movements and smiles, will communicate reassurance to children. This will help them align their responses to yours.
- ◆ Save housekeeping tasks, such as lunch time cleanup, until after you help the children find their security items and get settled on their cots. Stay engaged with the children as they transition to their cots.
- ★ Consider a toddler's ability to wait and set appropriate expectations.

Put It All Together

Toddler 21



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Mr. Mateo and Ms. Christina are care teachers for eight toddlers. Soon it will be time for outdoor play. Noticing the warm and sunny spring day, Mr. Mateo and Ms. Christina discuss adjusting the schedule to allow the toddlers more outside play time before lunch. However, knowing that the children rely on eating at the same time and that most have nap times that meet their needs, the teachers decide to follow the planned morning schedule. They choose instead to add extra time to the afternoon outdoor schedule since it occurs during free play and not routine care. Mr. Mateo makes a note to take additional items outdoors for afternoon play so the toddlers will still have a variety of materials to choose from for their extended play and learning time.

During lunchtime conversation, the teachers tell the children that after snack they will go outside to enjoy the warm spring weather. Once the toddlers have had lunch and nap, the teachers remind the group that after snack they will go out to play. The teachers decided to add extra outdoor time to the beginning of the afternoon schedule instead of the end, which can conflict with departure routines.

When snack is over, Jacinda, 30 months, and Martha, 33 months, hurry to the door remembering that going outside is next. They are excited about going outside early. Thomas, 27 months, is slower to adapt to changes in the schedule. He is hesitant to leave what he is playing with. A couple of other toddlers are still involved in play and not eager to go outside right away. Ms. Christina takes the children who are ready to go outside, and Mr. Mateo helps the other children get ready to transition to outside play. The teachers are conscientious to maintain ratio within this grouping.

Mr. Mateo alerts Thomas, "We are going outside in 3 minutes." Thomas replies hesitantly, "Can I take Bear (his plush animal)?" Mr. Mateo replies, "Yes, Bear can go outside with you." Thomas asks, "Take puzzle?" Mr. Mateo answers, "Puzzle pieces may get lost outside. Puzzles need to stay indoors." Thomas hangs his head.

Mr. Mateo then asks Thomas, "Would you like to help me carry the basket of toys outside?" Thomas looks up with a smile and runs to the basket. The toddlers play outside an extra 20 minutes. Then Ms. Christina and Mr. Mateo transition the children to indoor play in the typical manner.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will remember people, objects and events.



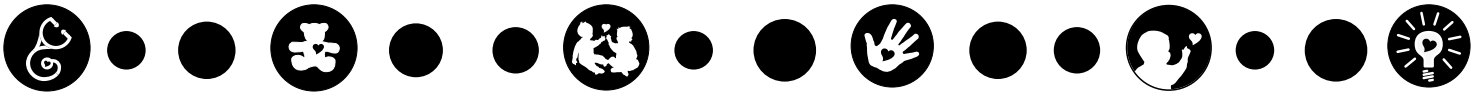
### Emotional Development:

The child will express feelings through facial expressions, gestures and sounds.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will comprehend the message of another's communication.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Into Everything...They Aren't Supposed to Be*

### **Watch**



Mr. Reuben is on the playground with his toddler group, enjoying a spectacular sunny and warm day. Olivia, 28 months, and Nicholas, 24 months, are playing on the climber. After several trips down the slide and exploring the climber, they start running and chasing each other. Olivia and Nicholas run to the fence looking and talking about what they see on the other side. Olivia grabs a handful of mulch and throws it over the fence. Nicholas imitates her and they are giggling and having a good time.

Mr. Reuben notices the children throwing mulch and goes over to them saying, "Stop throwing mulch, please. Come away from the fence," and ushers the children back to the climber. Olivia, having no interest in the climber, darts to the fence on other side of the playground. Nicholas joins her. Nicholas picks up mulch and throws it once again over the fence. Olivia joins in.

Mr. Reuben, frustrated they are at it again, walks the children to a patch of grass, asks them to sit down and play with the trucks he has brought outside. Mr. Reuben walks to the climber to supervise the other toddlers. Olivia, uninterested in the trucks, follows Mr. Reuben.

“ Sometimes you help me find acceptable choices that interest me. ”



## Watch



Mr. Reuben is on the playground with his toddler group, enjoying a spectacular sunny and warm day. Olivia, 28 months, and Nicholas, 24 months, are playing on the climber. After several trips down the slide and exploring the climber, they start running and chasing each other. Olivia and Nicholas run to the fence looking and talking about what they see on the other side. Olivia grabs a handful of mulch and throws it over the fence. Nicholas imitates her and they are giggling and having a good time.

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*more about... behavior*

*Children's behavior often reveals their feelings. Some behaviors, such as hitting, are more noticeable, and a care teacher may conclude the child is angry or frustrated. Other behaviors may give a more subtle message. A child throwing mulch over a fence may be saying, "I am bored, and this is keeping me entertained," "I can do something fun" or "I want my teacher's attention." It is the teacher's job to "read" the message and intentionally provide guidance, and learning and play choices that address what the child is telling you.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why does Nicholas copy Olivia's mulch throwing?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that Nicholas's imitation of Olivia indicates an interest in playing with her.
- ★ Acknowledge that imitation is part of a child's cognitive development and how he processes and understands information.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- Why didn't Olivia have interest in playing on the climber again?
- Why did Olivia and Nicholas go right back to throwing the mulch, even after I told them to stop?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Consider that toddlers like new, interesting experiences. Olivia's earlier play with the climber may have satisfied her interest in that activity for the time being.
- ▮ Acknowledge that toddlers will create their own "fun" and experiences if the surrounding environment, materials and people do not provide interesting and challenging choices to explore.
- ★ Recognize that toddlers test boundaries and are still learning adult rules, expectations and the possible consequences of inappropriate and unsafe behavior.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- How can I get the children to play with the materials I've provided?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Consider that toddlers may stay engaged longer with an experience if they choose it.
- ▮ Recognize that toddlers may easily get bored with experiences and materials lacking novelty and age and developmentally appropriate challenge. Materials should vary in challenge so children can practice current and emerging skills.
- ▲ Encourage children's interest while redirecting the part of the activity that is inappropriate. For example, help Nicholas and Olivia use the trucks to move and dump the mulch.
- ▮ Provide many safe, appropriate opportunities for large muscle play and materials for outdoor exploration.
- ▮ Supply additional materials children can use for complex play. For example, add a variety of vehicles that have different functions (front loaders, cranes, dump trucks).
- ▲ Join in children's play; talk about their ideas and ask questions. Children will learn how to play with peers by playing with you.
- ▲ Make eye contact, use non-verbal facial expressions and gestures, such as smiling, pointing, and nodding your head, to communicate what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior and to show your interest in their play.

Put It All Together



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Mr. Reuben is on the playground with his toddler group, enjoying a spectacular sunny and warm day. Mr. Reuben brought out a variety of construction vehicles, play hard hats, shovels and pails. He also brought out balls and buckets so children can throw the balls into buckets. In addition, he put out shoe-boxes, plastic containers with lids, and magnifying glasses the children can use for exploration. He knows his toddlers are always on the go and always searching for something interesting and new to do.

Olivia, 28 months, and Nicholas, 24 months, are playing on the climber. After several trips down the slide and exploring the climber, they start running and chasing each other. Olivia and Nicholas run to the fence looking and talking about what they see on the other side. Olivia grabs a handful of mulch and throws it over the fence. Nicholas imitates her, and they are giggling and having a good time.

Mr. Reuben, noticing the children throwing mulch, goes over and kneels next to them, still being able to see the other children on the playground, and says, "Stop throwing mulch please." He had seen the children looking through the fence before the mulch throwing began so he says, "What do you see over there?" referring to the other side of the fence. Olivia remarks, "A bird was hopping." "It was hopping? Maybe it was looking for a worm. Nicholas, did you see the bird?" asks Mr. Reuben. Nicholas answers, "It flew away." Mr. Reuben comments, "Wonder where it went?" Olivia replies, "It went home to its Mommy." Mr. Reuben asks Nicholas, "Where do you think the bird went?" Nicholas replies, "Home to Daddy."

Wanting to direct the children away from possibly throwing mulch again, Mr. Reuben asks, "Do you want to stay and look for more birds or do you want to discover something else to do?" Olivia says, "Something else." Mr. Reuben shows her and Nicholas the items he brought outside. Nicholas grabs a truck, bulldozer and a hard hat and runs to the climber. Mr. Reuben says to Nicholas, "You can use your construction equipment with the mulch but let's find a safe place away from the climber to play." He helps Nicholas move his items to a space clear of traffic. He reminds Nicholas, "Remember, no throwing mulch." He smiles at Nicholas and looks around to see what Olivia has chosen. She was looking through a magnifying glass. Mr. Reuben helps her look at mulch, grass and leaves, some of which Olivia collected in a shoe box. Other toddlers are interested in the new items too.

Mr. Reuben supervises the toddlers, being sure to make eye contact, smile and interact with them during their play.



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the movements of his or her body in order to move and to interact with the environment.



### Emotional Development:

The child will manage his or her behavior.



### Social Development:

The child will engage in give-and-take exchanges with an adult.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Into Everything...As They Roam Around the Room*

### **Watch**



Padma and Hoshi, 25 months old, are toddlers in Ms. Bernice's family child care program. They have been together in child care since they were infants and have spent a great deal of time in each other's company. They like to do the same thing at the same time. Ms. Bernice lets them select and pursue their own activity choices but they often have trouble finding something to do and staying on task.

Padma starts the day in the art area where watercolors are available; Hoshi, who was roaming around the room, soon joins her. Ms. Bernice helps them get on their smocks and prepares the materials. After a few strokes, Padma says, "I done," takes her smock off, and leaving her art supplies, heads to the block and vehicle area where she proceeds to pull all of the blocks off of the shelf. Hearing the commotion, Hoshi decides to check it out, dropping his art supplies too.

Hoshi watches Padma stack a few blocks before joining her in play. Hoshi pushes a truck around "delivering" blocks. Padma chooses a truck, pushes it into the stack of blocks knocking it down and continues to "drive" it out of the block area, over to the science shelf. Driving it along the top of the shelf, she knocks everything off. In the meantime, Ms. Bernice, who is warming a bottle for Lee, 4 months, sees Padma's path of clutter.

“ I'd rather learn with you  
than roam on my own. ”






## Watch



Padma and Hoshi, 25 months old, are toddlers in Ms. Bernice's family child care program. They have been together in child care since they were infants and have spent a great deal of time in each other's company. They like to do the same thing at the same time. Ms. Bernice lets them select and pursue their own activity choices but they often have trouble finding something to do and staying on task.

Padma starts the day in the art area where watercolors are available; Hoshi, who was roaming around the room, soon joins her. Ms. Bernice helps them get on their smocks and prepares the materials. After a few strokes, Padma says, "I done," takes her smock off, and leaving her art supplies, heads to the block and vehicle area where she proceeds to pull all of the blocks off of the shelf. Hearing the commotion, Hoshi decides to check it out, dropping his art supplies too.

Hoshi watches Padma stack a few blocks before joining her in play. Hoshi pushes a truck around "delivering" blocks. Padma chooses a truck, pushes it into the stack of blocks knocking it down and continues to "drive" it out of the block area, over to the science shelf. Driving it along the top of the shelf, she knocks everything off. In the meantime, Ms. Bernice, who is warming a bottle for Lee, 4 months, sees Padma's path of clutter.

*more about...a sentence's impact* 

Simple sentences spoken to toddlers can hold a wealth of knowledge. Take a look at this sentence: "Padma, you used your brush to paint long yellow stripes." It has a pronoun, "you"; an action-verb, "used"; a possessive, "your brush"; a preposition, "to paint"; adjectives, "long" and "yellow," and a descriptive noun, "stripes." A sentence such as "you...paint...stripes" gives children rich experiences with language. It helps them expand their vocabulary and learn language that will build a foundation for school success. Make the most of every simple sentence you and a child share.

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why do some toddlers keep changing the focus of their play?
- Why is the development of early friendships beneficial?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that toddlers may have short attention spans and gradually develop the ability to attend to experiences for increasingly longer periods of time.
- ★ Consider that toddlers may stay engaged with an experience a little longer if they choose what to do.
- ★ Appreciate that toddlers develop at their own pace; some may attend to an activity for less time than others.
- ★ Realize that making friends is one of the major tasks of childhood and helps build the foundation for success in having friendships later in life.
- ★ Consider the importance of peer relationships. They influence how children view themselves and their place in the social world.
- ★ Realize peer relationships contribute to a child's sense of self-competence, formation of identity, opportunities to use language and non-verbal communication, and overall social skills.
- ★ Recognize toddlers' social awareness and interest in interacting with certain peers. Use children's desire to play together to motivate them to learn more about the social rules of getting along with each other.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- Why is Padma roaming from one area to the next rather than engaging in focused play?
- How can I help Padma and Hoshi engage in play and learning?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that toddlers get bored with experiences and materials that are not age and developmentally appropriate. Materials should vary in how challenging they are to help children practice current and emerging skills.
- ★ Get to know each toddler's specific interests, likes and dislikes.
- ▲ Consider that roaming may indicate a child may need your help to engage in focused play experiences.
- ▲ Discover the meaning of each child's behavior and respond accordingly.
- ▲ Make eye contact and use other non-verbal gestures, such as smiling, pointing, and nodding your head, to communicate and show interest.
- ▲ Comment on toddlers' activities. Your words support language development and help them maintain their attention on their activity.
- ▲ Join in children's play; talk about their ideas and ask questions.

Put It All Together

Toddler 29



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Padma and Hoshi, 25 months old, are toddlers in Ms. Bernice's family child care program. They have been together in child care since they were infants and have spent a great deal of time in each other's company. They like to do the same thing at the same time. Ms. Bernice lets them select and pursue their own activity choices but they often have trouble finding something to do and maintaining their attention on an activity.

Ms. Bernice sees Padma looking around the room and asks, "What would like to do this morning?" Padma replies, "I want to paint." "Well, let's get you set up to be an artist." Seeing Hoshi watching Padma and knowing they like to be together, Ms. Bernice invites him to paint too. Hoshi gives a big smile and hurries to the art center. The children put on their smocks, Ms. Bernice helping if needed, and she and the toddlers open the paints, fill the water cups and choose brushes together. Padma and Hoshi like to help and helping in the preparation makes each of them feel important and competent. It also teaches sequencing and the importance of being part of the group.

Padma hangs her paper and seeing that Hoshi is having trouble hanging his, she grabs hold of the corner of Hoshi's paper and says, "I help you." "Thank you, Padma, for helping Hoshi hang his paper," says Ms. Bernice. Hoshi imitates Ms. Bernice, "Thank you, Padma." Ms. Bernice, knowing Padma likes to have her stay near and interact with her, tells Padma, "I am going to warm Lee's bottle and will be right back to see what you two have painted." While caring for Lee, 4 months, Ms. Bernice looks over at the artists and says, "Hoshi, you painted many green dots all over your paper." Hoshi looks at his paper, paints another dot, and looking at Ms. Bernice says, "I paint green dot." Ms. Bernice smiles in response.

"Padma, you used your brush to paint long yellow stripes," remarks Ms. Bernice. Padma replies, "See yellow," looking at Ms. Bernice. "I do. Are you painting more yellow?" Padma replies, "No, paint red," as she dips her brush into the blue paint. "You dipped your brush into blue paint," says Ms. Bernice. Padma looks at her brush, states, "blue," and paints stripes of blue.

Ms. Bernice feeds Lee next to Padma and Hoshi so she can continue their interactions. She has realized that these ongoing interactions have helped Padma and Hoshi remain interested in this experience longer than they typically would and have reduced Padma's and Hoshi's roaming. She knows they will be choosing something else to do soon so she is preparing how to continue her interactions while doing other care giving duties. Also, she wonders how she can have them help in setting up other play and learning experiences, even routine care, to keep them engaged and learning.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will be able to mirror, repeat and practice the actions modeled by another.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize his or her ability to do things.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will participate in interactions with language that follow the expected practices of the child's family and community.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Into Everything...Tearing Things Off of the Wall*

### **Watch**



Mr. Dwayne, a care teacher in the toddler room, just received a new package of posters and is eager to display them throughout his room. The next morning before the children arrive he hangs the posters in various learning and routine areas, matching the content of the poster with the functions of the area.

Hailey, 31 months, on her arrival notices the poster of bananas on the front of the refrigerator door while she helps her papa put her lunch away. "Look, bananas," Hailey says as she points to the poster, "I have bananas." Her papa smiles replying, "Yes you do, we packed a banana in your lunch today." While Hailey's papa gets her settled and then leaves, Sophie, 18 months, arrives with her mom, Mrs. Mast. As Mrs. Mast is putting Sophie's lunch in the refrigerator, she points to the poster of the bananas and asks, "What are these, Sophie?" Sophie replies, "'Nanas" as she grabs the poster. Mrs. Mast takes her hand and says, "No, Sophie." Mr. Dwayne notices the interaction and realizes that Sophie may need some guidance near the posters.

As other children arrive, many have taken interest in the posters, pointing to them, asking, "What's this?" and Mr. Dwayne happily talks about the posters. It isn't long though before Ali, 19 months, has removed the posters depicting different meals in the dramatic play area and dropped them on the floor. Sophie returns to the eating area and removes the banana, tomato and peas posters. Hailey yells, "No, Sophie," and tries to stick the posters back up. The food posters get destroyed in the process.

Mr. Dwayne helps Sophie and Hailey then observes Ali waving the butterfly and bird posters as he walks around. Mr. Dwayne is frustrated. He could tell the toddlers loved the posters, but now they are mostly destroyed.

“ Make my environment ready for me to touch and freely explore so I can learn from it. ”



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## more about...displays

*Displays are beneficial to a child's learning when a few simple guidelines are followed. Keep displays relevant to the child's world. Take photos of their community; include photos of family, friends, pets, their home, car or a city bus to help them identify with their world. Display pictures that show animals and nature in a photo style, rather than always in cartoon form. Pictures of ABCs and numbers are not appropriate for infants and toddlers and will not help young children learn the alphabet or to count. Change your display at least monthly to keep children interested. What is most important about using displays with infants and toddlers is your interaction. Talk about what is in the photo, ask simple questions, make up a story about the photo, and use descriptive words, such as colors, shapes and sounds. Magazines and inexpensive calendars make great resources for pictures. Displays can enhance any environment.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

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◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How should posters and other visual materials be displayed?
- What benefits, in addition to providing opportunities for interactions, do displays provide?

### Give It a Try

- ▮ Display visual materials throughout the room to match areas, as Mr. Dwayne did, to help children make connections between experiences, initiate interactions and enhance learning.
- ▮ Post displays at child's eye level to maximize the benefits of a display's content and opportunities for interactions.
- ▮ Laminate display materials for durability.
- ▮ Use clear adhesive film that covers the entire display to secure it to the wall.
- ▮ Attach sticky backed Velcro® to the back of any displays and to the wall. Children can safely remove and reattach the display.
- ▮ Purchase commercially-made display cases to use in early care and education programs.
- ▮ Consider that appropriate displays create an interesting environment.
- ▲ Talk about displays to introduce children to new vocabulary, help them understand relationships among peers and family, and to reinforce language skills.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- Why do toddlers sometimes tear things off the wall?
- What is the most appropriate response when Ali and Sophie take down the posters?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Consider that younger toddlers may not understand that displays are to stay on the walls, and that they may have less ability to control their impulses.
- ★ Set realistic expectations about how toddlers explore their environment.
- ★ Expect children to be curious and to explore everything in their environment, including displays.
- ▲ Explain to Ali and Sophie that posters stay on the wall for everyone to see. Show them how to touch the pictures without tearing them down.
- ▲ Avoid shaming or humiliating the child.

Put It All Together

Toddler 33



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Mr. Dwayne, a care teacher in the toddler room, just received a new package of posters and is eager to display them throughout his room. Knowing that the younger toddlers may not be able to resist tearing them down, he decides to wait to hang them until he gets a roll of clear adhesive film to mount them. He also decides to cover both sides of the posters with adhesive film for extra protection.

The following week he has all of his supplies and the posters are ready. He hangs the posters in various learning and routine areas matching the content of the posters with the functions of the area.

Hailey, 31 months, on her arrival notices the poster of bananas on the front of the refrigerator door while she helps her papa put her lunch away. "Look, bananas," Hailey says as she points to the poster, "I have bananas." Her papa smiles replying, "Yes you do, we packed a banana in your lunch today." While Hailey's papa gets her settled and then leaves, Sophie, 18 months, arrives with her mom, Mrs. Mast. As Mrs. Mast is putting Sophie's lunch in the refrigerator, she points to the poster of the bananas and asks, "What are these, Sophie?" Sophie replies, "Nanas" as she grabs at the poster. But the poster is mounted with adhesive film to the refrigerator so Sophie can't grasp it. Mrs. Mast says, "Yes, those are bananas. You like bananas don't you?" Sophie nods her head yes.

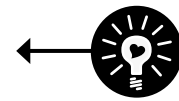
As other children arrive, many have taken an interest in the posters, pointing to them and asking, "What's this?" while Mr. Dwayne happily talks about the posters. Ali, 19 months, is patting the picture of spaghetti hung in the dramatic play area. Mr. Dwayne observes this and walks toward him saying, "Ali, what is that?" Ali replies, "Noodles." Mr. Dwayne remarks, "Yes, those are spaghetti noodles. Do we have spaghetti in our play kitchen?" Ali looks around and finds plastic spaghetti in the toy food bin. He replies, "Here noodles" and puts it on a plate.

Mr. Dwayne sees Hailey and Sophie in the eating area pointing and talking to each other about the bananas, tomato and peas posters. Mr. Dwayne, seeing how the children are interested and enthusiastically communicating about the posters, makes a mental note to rotate the posters with other photos and pictures every three to four weeks to keep the interest of the children.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will convey a message or transfer information to another person.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will learn to group people and objects based on their attributes.



### Social Development:

The child will engage with other children.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *So Aggressive...With Others*

### **Watch**



Juanita, 22 months, and Cole, 28 months, are playing in the dramatic play area with baby dolls and bottles while Eliza, 24 months, is reading books in the cozy area. Keeton, 18 months, rides a push trike in the active play area. He rides out of the active play area and sails by Juanita and Cole, almost bumping into them. Eliza squeals in protest as Keeton's trike comes to rest against her leg. Keeton slaps her book to the floor and then kicks it with his foot. Startled, Eliza scoots away to the far corner of the cozy area. Care teacher, Ms. Alix, looks up from the bathroom where she is helping a child use the toilet and says, "Keeton, don't run into your friends with the trike. If you can't keep it in the trike area, I will have to put it away." Keeton pauses, looking at Ms. Alix while she speaks to him; then he is off again.

Meanwhile, Juanita reaches over and grabs Cole's baby doll. Then she reaches to take the bottle away from him. He yells, "No, 'Nita, my bottle," and holds tightly to the baby bottle. A tug of war ensues with both children yelling. Ms. Alix comes over to see what all of the noise is about. Keeton pushes the trike toward dramatic play. He is going pretty fast and bumps into Ms. Alix and Juanita before pedaling off again. Ms. Alix repeats herself, "Keeton, I told you to stay in the trike area. Get off that trike and go sit down in the cozy area." Glaring at her, Keeton heads to the trike area, continuing to ride the trike. Ms. Alix makes sure Juanita is alright and gives the baby doll back to Cole before heading after Keeton.

When she catches up with Keeton, Ms. Alix kneels in front of the trike and stops him. She takes his hand, gently pulls him off of the trike, and walks him to the cozy area. "I told you to go to the cozy area. Sit here until you can listen to my words." She sits him down and hands him a book. Keeton throws the book on the floor and kicks it with his foot. Ms. Alix takes him by the hand and says, "Keeton, you are hurting your friends and destroying the books. You'll have to stay with me until you can listen to my words and do what you are supposed to do." For the rest of play time, Ms. Alix holds Keeton's hand and takes him with her as she goes about her duties.

“ Help me understand boundaries so I can keep having fun with other children. ”



## Watch



Juanita, 22 months, and Cole, 28 months, are playing in the dramatic play area with baby dolls and bottles while Eliza, 24 months, is reading books in the cozy area. Keeton, 18 months, rides a push trike in the active play area. He rides out of the active play area and sails by Juanita and Cole, almost bumping into them. Eliza squeals in protest as Keeton's trike comes to rest against her leg. Keeton slaps her book to the floor and then kicks it with his foot. Startled, Eliza scoots away to the far corner of the cozy area. Care teacher, Ms. Alix, looks up from the bathroom where she is helping a child use the toilet and says, "Keeton, don't run into your friends with the trike. If you can't keep it in the trike area, I will have to put it away." Keeton pauses, looking at Ms. Alix while she speaks to him; then he is off again.

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*more about... impulse control* 

*Impulse control is an essential part of a child's developing emotion regulation and self-regulation. It starts developing in infancy and continues throughout the preschool years. A child in the process of learning impulse control can be challenging for an adult. A young toddler may only occasionally comply with a teacher's expectations. An older toddler is likely to express understanding of some boundaries, but may not yet have developed enough self-control to attend to them consistently. Being patient with the learning process is key. With appropriate supervision, guidance, and support from responsive care teachers, young children will begin to learn simple strategies to help themselves regulate their behavior.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why doesn't Keeton follow my directions?
- Whose needs should I attend to in this situation, Keeton's or Eliza's?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Help Keeton develop impulse control by stopping him from hurting others, encouraging him to follow social rules, and ensuring his needs will be met if he waits. Young toddlers, like Keeton, will likely not have the same ability to control their behavior as older toddlers.
- ▲ Respond promptly to Eliza so she knows you are concerned about her. Validate her feelings and encourage her to tell Keeton not to hurt her again.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- Why did Juanita take Cole's doll and baby bottle, instead of getting her own doll and baby bottle?
- How can I help Juanita and Cole learn to play together and reduce conflict?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that toddlers are all about "Me" and often seek instant gratification. They want "What they want, when they want it." As children develop, they observe teacher modeling and learn how to solve problems.
- ▮ Provide duplicate popular toys to reduce fights over scarce resources. Let Juanita know that there are plenty of baby dolls. Show her where they are.
- ▲ Play with children. Children will learn how to play with peers by playing with you.
- ▲ Help children solve their problems by encouraging them to create solutions together. Accept their ideas for resolution; help them try out solutions.
- ▲ When conflict occurs over possession of toys, hold the contested items in your hands during the brief resolution process. It takes the focus off whose toy it is and keeps the focus on the problem-solving process. Ensure children get toys back when the problem is resolved.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- Why doesn't Keeton understand the danger of riding the trike around the room?
- How do I help Keeton comply with this important safety guideline?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that toddlers test boundaries and have not internalized adult rules, expectations and the possible consequences of unsafe behavior. Stay close to Keeton to help him comply with your expectations.
- ★ Keep in mind Keeton's level of development when creating the environment and expectations.
- ▮ Create an environmental solution to the problem. Design a barrier or some visual separation between the trike area and other activity areas. Consider using painter's tape on the floor, traffic cones, or low shelf units as dividers.
- ▲ Encourage Keeton to stay inside the designated trike area by complimenting him when he does and by redirecting him if he doesn't. Follow through and help him put the trike away and find something else to do if he isn't able to keep it in the trike area.

Put It All Together



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Juanita, 22 months, and Cole, 28 months, are playing in the dramatic play area with baby dolls while Eliza, 24 months, is reading in the cozy area. Keeton, 18 months, rides a push trike in the trike area. He rides out of the active play area and sails by Juanita and Cole, almost bumping into them. He turns, riding into the cozy area where Eliza squeals as the trike comes to rest against her leg. Keeton slaps the book she is reading out of her hand. Startled by his response, Eliza scoots to the far corner of the cozy area.

Care teacher, Ms. Alix, looks up and sees Keeton run into Eliza's leg. Eliza tells Ms. Alix, who is comforting her, that Keeton hurt her leg with the trike. Ms. Alix responds, "I'm sorry Keeton hurt you. Let me look at your leg." She notices that Keeton is ready to make another loop. She stops him, calmly saying, "Keeton, please get off the trike and come with me." She leads Keeton over to the cozy area saying, "You hurt Eliza with your trike. I don't allow trikes in the cozy area. Eliza, tell Keeton, 'You hurt me; no bikes here.'" Ms. Alix asks Keeton to pick up the book and return it to Eliza. Eliza takes it and sits down to read.

Meanwhile, Juanita grabs Cole's baby doll and tries to take the baby bottle away from him. He yells, "No, 'Nita, my bottle," and holds on tightly. A tug of war ensues.

Ms. Alix holds out her hands saying, "Let me hold the doll and bottle while we figure out what to do." The children, familiar with Ms. Alix's problem solving strategy, hand them over. She asks what the problem is and listens to both children's descriptions. She restates what she heard. "Juanita grabbed Cole's baby and wanted his baby bottle. Is that right?" Both children nod. Ms. Alix says, "How can we solve this problem?" Cole says, "My doll." Juanita says, "My doll." Ms. Alix points to the doll bed and says, "Look, Juanita, there are more dolls." Ms. Alix says to Cole, "Here is your doll and bottle," and then hands another doll and bottle to Juanita saying, "This is your baby doll."

Keeton zooms by. Ms. Alix gently stops him and takes him to the trike area. She points to the floor where two strips of red tape define the trike area. "You can ride your trike anywhere between the red taped lines. When you ride your trike outside of the red tape, children get hurt. I won't allow that to happen. If you can't keep your trike inside the lines, I'll put it away and help you find another place to play." Keeton looks at Ms. Alix while she speaks to him. He nods and rides off staying inside the red lines. When he rides by her she comments, "Your trike is inside the red tape. Thanks for listening." Keeton beams at her and continues to ride inside the trike area. Ms. Alix stays close to make sure he is able to control the urge to ride outside of the trike area.



### Social Development:

The child will understand and respond to the emotions of others.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize herself or himself as a person with an identity, wants, needs, interests, likes and dislikes.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will participate in interactions with language that follow the expected practices of the child's family and community.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *So Aggressive...With Things*

### **Watch**



Andrew, age 27 months, is a busy toddler. When he arrives at his family child care program, he runs into the house, happy to be there. His care teacher, Ms. Evelyn, greets him and turns to talk to his dad while Andrew joins Erica, 19 months, who is playing with a baby doll. The adults chat briefly and exchange information on Andrew's night and morning; dad waves good-bye and leaves. Ms. Evelyn sees Andrew throwing a baby doll across the room. She walks over asking him what he is doing. He hangs his head, picks up the baby doll and gives it to her; he walks to the block area.

Andrew roughly knocks over the wagon of blocks creating a loud noise, making himself laugh. Ms. Evelyn is rocking Josie, 3 months, and asks Andrew to be quiet so she can finish putting her to sleep. He sits down, stacks the blocks into a tower and leans back to admire his work. Then, he kicks the building down with his foot. "Build with the blocks Andrew, don't kick them," reminds Ms. Evelyn. He looks at her then pulls his knees into his chest and kicks the blocks across the floor with both feet, sending them sliding. Ms. Evelyn puts a sleeping Josie into her crib and walks over to talk with Andrew. "Throwing baby dolls and kicking blocks are not allowed. You need to put the blocks in the wagon if you are done playing with them," she explains. She leaves him to do the work and picks up a book to read to Erica.

Andrew ignores her request to pick up the blocks and instead picks up a ball. It slips out of his hands, rolls away and Andrew follows it. When he catches up, he gives it a kick, sending it flying across the room. His reaction shows that he thinks that was pretty fun so he finds the ball again and gives it another whack with his foot. This time it lands in Josie's crib. By now, Ms. Evelyn is tired of his misbehavior. She takes Andrew gently by the hand and sits on the couch with him for a few minutes, reminding him he must use the toys the right way, and not kick and throw them.

“ I will create my own  
“fun” so talk and play  
with me to help me stay  
engaged in play. ”



## Watch



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## more about...a toddler's identity

Toddlers are all about "me." They have a sense of who they are and how they are connected to others. They are learning to make choices, which can be difficult for them and for you. They enjoy their sense of independence and competence and the ability to make things happen in their world. At the same time, toddlers still need you as their secure base. They need to know you are there to meet their physical and emotional needs and to provide interesting and challenging opportunities for play and learning. Toddlers use actions as a way to signal what they want and need from you: to talk with them, play with them, engage them. Though some of these actions may not be desirable, the toddlers are telling you something; be prepared to "listen" and act.

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

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## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How can I help Andrew get involved in an activity when he arrives?
- How can I get the information I need from Andrew's dad in a quick and efficient way?

### Give It a Try

- ▮ Set out a few of Andrew's favorite toys or activities before he arrives, drawing his attention to them upon arrival. Rotate toys/activities frequently.
- ◆ Encourage parent participation in arrival and departure transitions. Suggest to Andrew's dad that he take a few minutes to get involved with Andrew in an activity before leaving.
- ◆ Warmly greet parent and child, keep conversation centered on the child.
- ◆ Use a daily recording form for parents to document a child's home experiences, which will help you care for him that day. Include information on eating, sleeping, changes in routine, health, mood or new information. Explain to parents why this information and form are important.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- Why does Andrew throw the toys instead of play with them?
- How do I encourage Andrew to stay with an activity for longer periods of time?
- Why won't Andrew stop when I tell him not to throw or kick the toys?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Consider that toddlers are curious learners. They learn about cause and effect by causing things to happen. They explore the actions and reactions of objects and people, even through inappropriate behavior.
- ★ Tune in to Andrew's intention. He may be behaving inappropriately to get your attention.
- ★ Consider that toddlers may have short attention spans. Attention span differs among individuals and increases as a child ages.
- ▲ Engage in activities with children. Play alongside of them, following their lead. Modeling peer play is an effective teaching strategy.
- ▮ Offer additional materials and experiences with toys/activities to pique curiosity and extend learning. For example, provide toy animals/people and vehicles for block play.
- ▲ Give children plenty of time to experiment and create their own play. Children learn more when they choose activities that interest them.
- ★ Adjust your expectations and supervision to align with each child's developing ability to control behavior. Being responsive to children during routines, and in play, also helps children develop impulse control.
- ▲ Provide reminders (e.g., "Stack the blocks.") and prompts (e.g., "What is your baby doll hungry for?") to help Andrew stay focused.
- ▲ Stay close by children in play. Use your proximity, and verbal and non-verbal cues to supervise play.

Put It All Together

Toddler 41



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Andrew, age 27 months, is a busy toddler. When he arrives with his dad at his family child care program, he runs into the house, happy to be there. His care teacher, Ms. Evelyn, and Andrew's family worked together on a plan to help Andrew transition into her care as part of their morning routine. Several of Andrew's favorite toys are set out for him to play with upon arrival. Ms. Evelyn has also added a daily recording form for the family to provide information she might need for the day.

Upon arrival, Ms. Evelyn warmly welcomes them and Andrew dashes to the toy construction set; it is his favorite activity. Andrew's dad joins him in play and completes the daily recording form while sitting with Andrew. To help Andrew transition, Andrew's dad tells him he needs to leave soon. When it is time to go, his dad gives him a kiss and hug, and says good-bye.

Ms. Evelyn sees that Andrew is still engaged with the construction set so she joins Erica, 19 months, who is playing with a baby doll. After a few minutes, Andrew says he wants a baby and joins them. Ms. Evelyn knows Andrew likes to play pretend so she has added doll furniture and accessories, such as a stroller, blankets, dishes, spoons, play food, a doll bed and highchair, to extend his learning and spark his imagination. To build his language, social and cognitive skills, Ms. Evelyn asks what his baby doll's name is, what he is feeding her, and what he and the baby doll are going to do today. Ms. Evelyn also plays alongside Erica and her baby doll, modeling peer play.

Andrew plays in the block area, roughly knocking the wagon of blocks over, creating a very loud noise and making himself laugh. Ms. Evelyn reminds Andrew that the wagon is not for knocking over; he needs to play with the blocks or put them back in the wagon. He stacks the blocks up into a tall tower and leans back to admire his work. He looks for Ms. Evelyn who is rocking Josie, 3 months. Not seeing a response from Ms. Evelyn, he kicks the tower down. Ms. Evelyn, hearing the commotion, reminds Andrew that blocks are not for kicking; he will have to put them away if he kicks them again. Knowing toddlers enjoy building and toppling blocks, Ms. Evelyn reminds him he can topple the blocks with a gentle push of his hand, but kicking is not allowed. She also suggests that he choose some toy animals, people and vehicles, which are in the block area, to use with his blocks. He tells her he is going to get the cars and build a house for them. Animated, she responds, "You came up with an idea." He smiles and gets to work.

While Ms. Evelyn continues to rock Josie, she occasionally asks Andrew to describe what he is doing, and to tell her about his house and cars. She watches for his eye contact so she can respond verbally or with a smile.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will be able to mirror, repeat and practice the actions modeled by another.



### Emotional Development:

The child will express feelings through facial expressions, gestures and sounds.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will learn to group people and objects based on their attributes.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## Mouthing

### Watch



Kerrie, 24 months, and Shauna, 26 months, are playing in the dramatic play area during free play in Ms. Patti's classroom. The area has a collection of play furniture and a variety of dramatic play materials including baby dolls and baby bottles, a variety of play food, plates, bowls and spoons. Ms. Patti sits nearby and occasionally talks with the children as they play.

Kerrie and Shauna are playing with the baby dolls when Shauna picks up a baby bottle and puts it in her own mouth. Kerrie, wanting to mimic Shauna and not seeing another baby bottle, grabs a toy banana and puts it in her mouth. Ms. Patti notices the girls and says, "Girls, take those out of your mouths please. Those are for pretend. Feed the babies." The girls give them to their babies, but immediately lose interest.

Shauna and Kerrie discover the food in the play refrigerator. They grab a piece of food and take a "bite" then giggling, drop it on the floor. They are thoroughly enjoying themselves. Ms. Patti, hearing the laughter and seeing their actions, decides to intervene. "Girls that food is for pretend, not for putting in your mouth. Now we need to put it away because it is dirty. Here, take the spoons and bowls and feed your babies." Ms. Patti puts the baby dolls in the chairs and hands the girls bowls and spoons. Ms. Patti picks up the soiled play food and puts it aside to be cleaned and sanitized at a later time. When she checks on Shauna and Kerrie, they now have the play spoons in their mouths. Frustrated, Ms. Patti says, "Give me the spoons please. You two need to leave this area and find another place to play."

“By playing with me, you are teaching me new words, ideas and how to use materials. Besides, it's fun for both of us!”



## Watch



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*more about...toddlers  
and mouthing* 

*Many older toddlers have lost the urge to mouth objects as a way of learning about the world around them. You may, however, observe children putting items in their mouths. As children develop at their own pace, some older toddlers still have the need for oral exploration. Older toddlers love to imitate and play pretend and as with younger children, they bite objects during the teething process. To meet the individual needs of toddlers as they grow, provide safe and appropriate materials and interact and play with them to extend their learning and to guide and support their behavior.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why do older toddlers mouth toys and materials?
- How can I prevent the girls from putting the dramatic play materials in their mouths?
- How can I keep a healthy and safe environment?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Understand that toddlers, especially younger toddlers, learn by using all of their senses. This includes using mouthing, also known as oral exploration, to learn about textures, density (hard/soft), taste, and how things fit in space.
- ★ Recognize that some children have a sensory need to continually mouth objects. Provide them with appropriate teethingers throughout the day.
- ▲ Supervise play, calmly telling children what they can do with dramatic play materials and what behavior needs stopped.
- ▲ Interact with children during pretend play. Suggest play ideas such as rocking the doll to sleep after feeding it. This may focus the toddlers on play and reduce mouthing incidents.
- ▲ Explain and model how the girls might act out play ideas without mouthing. For example, demonstrate how to “feed the babies.”

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I teach toddlers that play food is not for mouthing?
- What strategies could I use to support pretend play?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Set appropriate expectations. Take time to explain what they can and cannot do with play food/dishes and why.
- ▲ Gently remind toddlers of the rules as they begin pretend play and when an instance of mouthing occurs. Children need to be reminded frequently of the rules as they are learning to understand the concept of pretend play.
- ▲ Build on toddlers’ ideas. Ask Shauna what her baby wants to eat after drinking her bottle. Help children follow through on their ideas.
- ▲ Engage children in pretend play. When Kerrie removes play food from the refrigerator, ask if she will “cook” you lunch, which leads to “eating” lunch. This is an opportunity to model pretend play behaviors.
- ▲ Extend play and learning. Suggest additional activities that focus on children’s play, such as “bathing” babies and taking babies on a walk.
- ▲ Add language to your interactions to increase children’s understanding of concepts, to build vocabulary and to develop their social communication skills.
- ◆ Remove mouthed materials from the classroom. Clean and sanitize before returning them. Add a variety of materials to the environment that are clean and ready for play so children have materials during the cleaning/sanitizing process.
- ▮ Frequently check materials for damage. Discard or, if possible, repair. Rotate plenty of additional materials into play so a variety are accessible for play.

Put It All Together

Toddler 45



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Kerrie, 24 months, and Shauna, 26 months, are playing in the dramatic play area during free play in Ms. Patti's classroom. The area has a collection of play furniture and a variety of dramatic play materials including baby dolls and baby bottles, play food, plates, bowls and spoons.

Ms. Patti has joined the girls saying, "Looks like you girls are taking care of babies." Knowing that Kerrie and Shauna tend to mouth the play food, Ms. Patti reminds them, "Remember that the babies' bottles and the play food are for pretend. Hold the bottle and food to the baby's mouth. It doesn't go in your mouth."

Seeing Shauna pick up the baby bottle, Ms. Patti says, "Shauna, is your baby hungry for her bottle?" as a reminder that the bottle is for the doll, not for Shauna. Shauna nods her head "yes" and feeds her baby. Kerrie, watching Shauna, puts a play banana up to her doll's mouth. Ms. Patti asks, "Kerrie, what is your baby eating?" Kerrie replies, "A banana. She is hungry." Ms. Patti responds, "I like bananas too. What do you like to eat?" Kerrie replies, "Cheese." "Mmmm, cheese is good. Does your baby want cheese?" asks Ms. Patti. Kerrie replies, "Yes, I check," and looks in the play refrigerator.

During the conversation with Kerrie, Ms. Patti noticed Shauna mouthing the doll's bottle. Ms. Patti didn't want to interrupt her exchange with Kerrie, but now that Kerrie is looking for something to feed her doll, Ms. Patti addresses Shauna. "Shauna, that bottle is for the doll, not for you. If you want to pretend to drink from the bottle, do it like this." Ms. Patti models how to pretend "drink" and makes a drinking noise. Shauna giggles and pretends to drink from the bottle too. "That's right, Shauna," comments Ms. Patti. Shauna starts feeding her baby again and says, "Me do it." Ms. Patti remembers to put the bottle in the soiled toy container when Shauna is done with it. Ms. Patti knows there are several other bottles the children can play with until this one is cleaned.

As Kerrie looks for cheese for her doll, she begins removing food from the play refrigerator and soon Shauna is clearing out the refrigerator with her. Understanding that the girls might be tempted to "eat" the food, Ms. Patti decides to suggest an activity that uses the play food since they appear to be interested in it. "Girls, would you make me lunch? I'm hungry." Kerrie shouts, "Yes!" and she and Shauna busily put food on the table. "Shauna, may I have a plate to put my orange on?" asks Ms. Patti. Shauna finds a plate and spoon, puts an orange on the plate and hands it to Ms. Patti. Kerrie says, "I cook corn," as she puts it in a play microwave. Ms. Patti and the girls continue serving lunch and pretend to eat it.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will participate in interactions with language that follow the expected practices of the child's family and community.



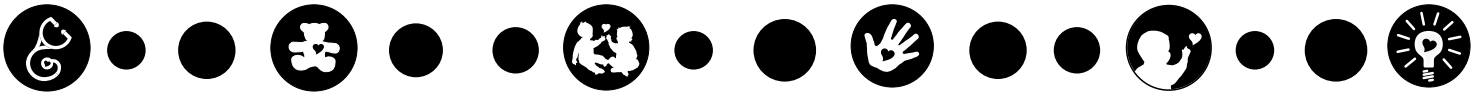
### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize his or her ability to do things.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will be able to mirror, repeat and practice the actions modeled by another.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Dumping*

### **Watch**



Mr. Landon cares for toddlers between the ages of 16 and 36 months. Carson, 19 months, and Nila, 21 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. Carson tips over the container of baby dolls and doll clothing in search of a doll. After sifting through the materials, he chooses a baby doll and lays it on the table beside him. Carson walks through the dolls and clothing scattered on the floor to reach the bin of play food, dishes, pots and pans. He turns the food and dish bin upside down and dumps the contents onto the floor.

Catching Nila's attention, both he and Nila spread out the items while searching for what they want. Carson finds a baby doll's bottle which he "feeds" to his doll. Nila, turning to put play food into the toddler-sized grocery cart, notices it is already full of an assortment of dramatic play materials, such as toy phones, dress-up hats, a plush animal, and items for a play doctor's kit. She proceeds to turn the cart on its side and scoops out the materials. Once she sets it upright, she puts her play food into the cart, but when she tries to push the cart it is blocked by the materials dumped on the floor.

Mr. Landon notices the mess Carson and Nila have made and joins them in the dramatic play area. In a friendly tone of voice he says, "What did you two do? You made a big mess. We need to clean this up." Mr. Landon scoops the items up off the floor and puts them back in the bins. He takes the assortment of dramatic play materials that Nila dumped out of the cart and places them on an empty shelf. "No more dumping. Now you two have room to play," he says after clearing the floor.

“ If I can easily see what I can play with, I learn more and may create less clutter. ”



## Watch



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*more about...an organized environment* 

*An organized environment that meets the needs of children extends their learning experiences, provides opportunities for complex play, is a beginning step on teaching children organizational skills and reduces clutter. Organizing materials takes little time and saves time for teachers and children when searching for materials for learning and play. Also, materials can be forgotten when buried under other materials, which leads to missed learning opportunities. Using small containers and child-size shelving to store similar items that children can see at a glance provides many benefits for a developing child.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why do toddlers dump containers of materials?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Acknowledge that toddlers are active explorers and are interested in seeing what happens when they empty and fill up different types of containers. Dumping also allows toddlers to see all available items at a glance.
- ★ Consider that toddlers have not fully developed the self-control needed to patiently search for items of interest.
- ★ Recognize that a child's temperament influences how a child reacts to the environment.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How do I adapt to a toddler's interest in dumping materials and at the same time avoid too much clutter in the environment?
- How can I arrange the environment so toddlers can easily see available play materials?

### Give It a Try

- ▮ Organize similar materials together. Store play food in a separate container than play dishes; store dolls separately from doll clothing.
- ▮ Limit the number of like materials accessible to toddlers. Too many play food items, for example, can create clutter and hinder toddlers from easily finding items they desire. But be sure to provide enough variety of play food items so children aren't competing and have enough materials for complex play.
- ▮ Rotate extra toys into play every two weeks.
- ▮ Use small size bins (e.g. shoebox size). It is helpful for toddlers to have two smaller bins of play food, rather than one big bin.
- ▮ Place items on shelves in an organized manner by keeping similar items together (e.g. all toy phones together) and space materials so toddlers can see at a glance what is available for play.
- ▲ Be a role model when searching and re-shelving materials. Toddlers imitate what they see.

Put It All Together

Toddler 49



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Mr. Landon cares for toddlers between the ages of 16 and 36 months. Carson, 19 months, and Nila, 21 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. Carson sees four baby dolls on the shelf; he chooses one and then lays it on the table beside him. He also takes one of the baby doll's bottles that is sitting next to the baby dolls on the shelf. Carson "feeds" his baby doll that is laying on the table.

Meanwhile, Nila pulls out one of the two small food bins and turns it over, dumping the five play food items that were stored in it onto the floor. Mr. Landon, sitting nearby, watches Nila choose the "taco" and "box of rice" from the pile and then put them into the toddler-sized shopping cart. Mr. Landon comments, "Nila, it looks like you are shopping at the grocery store. Are you going to use the food items on the floor? If not, let's put them back in the bin." He holds out the bin, and Nila picks up the items from the floor and puts them back in the bin. Then Nila says, "Go store," and pushes her cart around the room. Mr. Landon asks, "Do you want to wear a hat to the store?" Nila smiles saying, "Yes," and chooses a dress-up hat sitting on top of the child-size shelf that separates the dramatic play area from the block area.

Nila pushes her cart into the dramatic play area and spots three toy phones on the shelf. She chooses one and holding it to her ear says, "Hello." She drops the phone into the grocery cart and pushes the cart around the room again. Carson, watching Nila, picks up another phone and holds it to his ear too. Mr. Landon, seeing Carson with the phones, joins him and pretends to talk on the other toy phone saying, "Hello, Carson." Carson replies, "Hello, Carson."



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the movements of his or her body in order to move and to interact with the environment.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will be able to mirror, repeat and practice the actions modeled by another.



### Social Development:

The child will engage in give-and-take exchanges with an adult.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Tantrumming*

### **Watch**



Anetria, 27 months, and Seth, 30 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. There are two prop boxes – one is the firefighter prop box and the other is the hats prop box. Anetria has the firefighter's hat on her head and is pulling the hoses, made of 2 feet long pieces of garden hose, out of the firefighter's prop box. Seth is watching what Anetria is doing. After watching for a couple of minutes, Seth pulls the hat off of Anetria's head. She looks at him and says, "My hat!" He turns and walks away, picking up a piece of hose on the way.

Anetria screams, begins to cry, and jumps up and down, flailing her hands and arms. Soon she collapses on the floor, still screaming. Her family child care teacher, Ms. Brenda, comes over and says, "Calm down, Anetria. You are disturbing your friends." Anetria's tantrum continues.

Ms. Brenda tries to distract Anetria saying, "Why don't you and I go play with the puzzles?" offering her a hand. Anetria screams even louder and hits Ms. Brenda with her flailing arms. Ms. Brenda wonders what to try next.

“ I need your guidance so I can learn how to resolve disagreements. ”



## Watch



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## more about...tantrums

*Tantrums are one way a child expresses her feelings. They are part of typical development during the older mobile infant and toddler years. Tantrums are not completely preventable, but a knowledgeable, skillful approach may help you to "catch" some tantrums before they start. You need to understand child development, know each child's capabilities and triggers, read each child's cues, and be "extra" observant in potential tantrum situations. Then you can interact instead of having to react. Remember, tantrums are more frequent when a child is tired, bored, hungry or frustrated. Be prepared and have a plan to prevent and interact.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why did Seth take Anetria's firefighter's hat instead of getting his own hat?
- How can I help Seth and Anetria learn to play together and reduce conflict?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that toddlers are all about "me" and often seek instant gratification. They want "what they want, when they want it." As children develop, they learn how to solve problems by following teacher guidance and observing teacher modeling of behavior.
- ▮ Provide duplicate popular toys to reduce fights over scarce resources.
- ▲ Join in play with children. Children will learn how to play with peers by playing with you.
- ▲ Help children solve their problems by encouraging them to create solutions together. Accept their ideas for resolution; help them try out solutions.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- Why is Anetria's reaction to the situation so intense?
- What are strategies to address Anetria's behavior?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Consider that some young children are further along than others in learning to control their impulses and self-regulate their behavior.
- ★ Recognize that strong reactions are one of the ways young children communicate their frustration.
- ★ Consider each child's temperament. Children will react differently to similar situations based on their temperament.
- ▲ Validate Anetria's intense emotions. Label them so she knows you understand her feelings. "You are mad that Seth took your hat."
- ▲ Use a quiet, reassuring voice. Give yourself a moment to calm down, rather than responding with anger.
- ▲ Give Anetria time to calm herself before trying to resolve the situation. Stay close so she knows you are available but avoid interacting with her directly until she gains control of her emotions.
- ▮ Let Anetria calm down in the cozy area with her security object, such as a favorite blanket or plush animal, if she chooses. Offer to help her get comfortable.

Put It All Together

Toddler 53



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Anetria, 27 months, and Seth, 30 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. There are two prop boxes – one is the firefighter prop box and the other is the hats prop box. Anetria has the firefighter's hat on her head and is pulling the hoses, made of 2 feet long pieces of garden hose, out of the firefighter's prop box. Seth is watching what Anetria is doing. After watching for a couple of minutes, Seth pulls the hat off of Anetria's head. She looks at him and says, "My hat!" He turns and walks away, picking up a piece of hose on the way.

Anetria screams, begins to cry, and jumps up and down, flailing her hands and arms. Soon she collapses on the floor, still screaming. The family child care teacher, Ms. Brenda, comes over to the area, kneels down at Anetria's eye level and says, "You are very upset. You didn't want Seth to take your hat." Putting her hand gently on Anetria's back she asks, "Do you want me to sit with you?" Anetria is inconsolable, twists away from Ms. Brenda and continues to cry loudly. Ms. Brenda tells Anetria, "I'll help you get a hat when you are done screaming and calm down." Ms. Brenda attends to other children while keeping an eye on Anetria.

"Seth, Anetria is upset because you took her hat. She would like her hat back. What can you do to help her?" Seth replies, "This is my hat," holding the hat on his head. "That's Anetria's hat," says Seth pointing to the other firefighter's hat. "Let's see if she wants it when she comes back to play," says Ms. Brenda.

After a couple of minutes, Anetria begins to calm. Seeing Seth and Ms. Brenda talking in the dramatic play area, Anetria goes to Ms. Brenda and snuggles beside her. Knowing the toddlers are learning to problem solve, Ms. Brenda helps them through the process. Mr. Brenda says, "Anetria, Seth has something for you. Seth, what do you want to do with the hat?" Seth hands Anetria a firefighter's hat and says, "Here you go." "Anetria, look what Seth has for you. Would you like to wear it?" asks Ms. Brenda. Anetria nods her head "yes" and puts the hat on. Ms. Brenda thanks Seth and asks both of them if they want to play with the fire hoses. They both say, "Yes," eagerly and make siren sounds as they carry the hoses around the dramatic play area.



### Emotional Development:

The child will express feelings through facial expressions, gestures and sounds.



### Social Development:

The child will understand and respond to the emotions of others.



### Social Development:

The child will engage with other children.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Running*

### **Watch**



Mr. Troy and Ms. Alethea are care teachers for a group of toddlers. They have arranged all of the furniture and equipment so it backs up to the walls around the edges of the room. The teachers thought this would allow for a larger open space for children to play and for different learning experiences to occur. The play and learning areas arranged around the room include dramatic play, blocks and vehicles, manipulatives and music, and a cozy book area. Tables used for meals and snacks are off to one side of the room.

Yin, 23 months, and Diego, 19 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. Suddenly, Yin dashes across the carpet to the block area. Mr. Troy calls to her saying, "Don't run, Yin." Yin looks at him, smiles, picks up a block and runs back. She puts the block to her ear saying, "Hi, Mommy," pretending it is a toy telephone. Diego, liking her idea, runs and gets a block for himself. Seeing Diego, Ms. Alethea says, "Diego, didn't you hear Mr. Troy? No running. It is dangerous."

Bailey, 30 months, finished looking at the books in the cozy area, runs to the manipulative area and slides to a stop near the shelf. Mr. Troy calls to her and says, "Bailey, stop running please. Walk in the classroom." Shelby, 22 months, seeing Bailey pull a pegboard off the shelf, runs to join her. Shelby chooses the other pegboard and they play side by side on the floor. Tired of reminding children to walk and frustrated that they won't, Mr. Troy ignores Shelby's running.

“ I am driven to move, and move fast when I can. Arrange the room so I can be safe. ”



## Watch



Mr. Troy and Ms. Alethea are care teachers for a group of toddlers. They have arranged all of the furniture and equipment so it backs up to the walls around the edges of the room. The teachers thought this would allow for a larger open space for children to play and for different learning experiences to occur. The play and learning areas arranged around the room include dramatic play, blocks and vehicles, manipulatives and music, and a cozy book area. Tables used for meals and snacks are off to one side of the room.

Yin, 23 months, and Diego, 19 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. Suddenly, Yin dashes across the carpet to the block area. Mr. Troy calls to her saying, "Don't run, Yin." Yin looks at him, smiles, picks up a block and runs back. She puts the block to her ear saying, "Hi, Mommy," pretending it is a toy telephone. Diego, liking her idea, runs and gets a block for himself. Seeing Diego, Ms. Alethea says, "Diego, didn't you hear Mr. Troy? No running. It is dangerous."

Bailey, 30 months, finished looking at the books in the cozy area, runs to the manipulative area and slides to a stop near the shelf. Mr. Troy calls to her and says, "Bailey, stop running please. Walk in the classroom." Shelby, 22 months, seeing Bailey pull a pegboard off the shelf, runs to join her. Shelby chooses the other pegboard and they play side by side on the floor. Tired of reminding children to walk and frustrated that they won't, Mr. Troy ignores Shelby's running.

*more about...learning on the go* 

*Giving toddlers opportunities to use their large muscles, such as by running, walking, climbing, pedaling, steering and balancing, gives them additional opportunities to learn and develop besides just working on their muscle skills. When engaged in large muscle (motor) experiences, children are building up their physical strength. Engaging in exercise is known to help bodies stay healthy, and just makes people feel better emotionally. As children interact with the environment and equipment, they solve problems and even feel confident to try a new challenge. Once they have success, they build the confidence to try again! Toddlers develop socially through interactions with peers, communicating and using language during these interactions. Running is more than getting from one point to the next; it is learning on the go!*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How can the room be arranged so toddlers might be less likely to run?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Consider the age, skills and developmental needs of children using the environment. Evaluate how your space meets these needs.
- ▮ Realize that children react to their environment. Larger open areas encourage running, whereas smaller defined areas encourage more focused play and learning.
- ▮ Arrange an open space in the middle of the room to be a flexible space used for different purposes, though not a large wide-open space that may encourage running.
- ★ Identify toddler behaviors that are unsafe or not appropriate for the space. Assess furniture arrangement and determine how it is affecting behavior.
- ▮ Arrange furniture to encourage safe and free movement that allows for easy supervision.
- ▮ Use low, stable child-size shelving, risers and furniture as dividers between play areas.
- ▮ Use areas for something other than their original purpose. For example, draw, paint, and assemble puzzles at the meal/snack table.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I encourage children not to run in the room?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Consider that toddlers will move whether it is safe to move or not. Toddlers, due to their developmental stage, are not often able to foresee hazardous situations.
- ▲ Talk to Yin at eye level and in close proximity about what you want her to do, namely walk, instead of run.
- ▲ Show Shelby the gesture for “stop” and describe what she is to do when she sees the signal.
- ▲ Recognize that toddlers need frequent reminders. Reminders should be brief and stated in a pleasant, but firm, tone of voice.
- ◆ Allow frequent opportunities for large muscle movement, such as dancing, climbing and running.

Put It All Together

Toddler 57



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Mr. Troy and Ms. Alethea are care teachers for toddlers in a small classroom. Understanding that toddlers love to move and move fast, and knowing it is unsafe to run in their room, they have arranged the room to eliminate large open spaces and eliminate a straight path that cuts through the room.

The teachers separate the space into play and learning areas using low, stable child-size shelf units and child-size furniture such as dramatic play chairs and a table. The shelves with manipulatives, like puzzles, pegboards, and lacing beads are positioned by the meal/snack table so toddlers can work at these tables, have a steady surface for play and are out of other toddler's traffic. The cozy book area is away from the block area, which can get pretty noisy. The middle of the room is an open space that can be used for a variety of experiences.

These different areas comfortably accommodate two to three toddlers, plus the teachers and leave adequate space for the toddlers to move about, and manipulate and use the materials in various ways. Some areas need more space than others. There is space near the meal/snack table for special experiences that may need more room.

Even with the room arranged to help toddlers slow down, they still move as they desire, though they can't pick up much speed when they run since furniture is strategically placed to break up the room. Yin, 23 months, and Diego, 19 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. Suddenly, Yin hurries to the block area and picks up a block. Mr. Troy seeing her, walks to her, kneels down and looking into her eyes says, "Yin, you must walk. Are you going back to Diego?" Yin nods "yes." Mr. Troy reminds her, "Please walk back," as he walks beside her. When she gets back to the dramatic play area, she puts the block to her ear saying, "Hi, Mommy," pretending it is a toy telephone. Diego, liking Yin's idea, heads off to get a block too; Mr. Troy says, "Diego, walk to the blocks," as he walks with Diego.

Ms. Alethea knows it is difficult to shadow toddlers who love to run. As a way to help them remember, and looking for an alternative to calling for them to "slow down" across the room, she shows the toddlers the "stop" sign; holding her hand up, palm out. Bailey, 30 months, finished looking at the books in the cozy area, scurries to the manipulative area. Seeing Bailey do this, Ms. Alethea watches for Shelby, 22 months, who might imitate Bailey, as the two children were playing in the same area. Shelby starts to take off; Ms. Alethea says, "Shelby" and holds up her hand in a "stop" gesture. Shelby, seeing the gesture, slows down.



### Social Development:

The child will have an awareness of his or her relationship to others in a group.



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the movements of his or her body in order to move and to interact with the environment.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will comprehend the message of another's communication.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Climbing*

### **Watch**



Mr. Chad is having a pretend meal in the dramatic play area with Jocelyn, 20 months, and Lucy, 28 months, while Ms. Kendra is assisting Marshall, 28 months, with toileting. Mr. Chad scans the room and notices Nia, 24 months, standing tall on top of the table the toddlers use for eating and manipulative play. Mr. Chad anxiously calls to her, “Nia, get down! We don’t climb on tables.” Nia looks at Mr. Chad but doesn’t move.

Mr. Chad lifts Nia off of the table saying, “That is dangerous. Keep your feet on the floor. Now go and play.” Mr. Chad waits until Nia is headed away from the table and rejoins Jocelyn and Lucy. Mr. Chad notices Nia looking out the window and is pleased she has found something else to do.

Marshall reenters the play space after toileting and quickly locates Nia and joins her at the window. The two start giggling and running around the room. Mr. Chad yells to them, “Nia and Marshall, quit running and find something to play with.” The two stop and look at Mr. Chad as he continues, “Ms. Kendra will be out in a minute to play with you.” Mr. Chad decides he needs to clean up the dramatic play pretend lunch with Jocelyn and Lucy so he can pay more attention to Nia and Marshall.

In the meantime, Ms. Kendra comes back into the play space and spots Nia on top of the table and Marshall climbing on the chair on his way to the table top. Ms. Kendra scoops Nia off of the table and stops Marshall. She tells them, “Mr. Chad said to stay off the table. Now go sit in the cozy area and look at some books until you can quit climbing.” Ms. Kendra walks them to the cozy area, and then stacks the chairs so the children can’t use them to get onto the table.

“ I sure am active so offering me ways to move safely helps me explore to my heart’s delight. ”



## Watch



Mr. Chad is having a pretend meal in the dramatic play area with Jocelyn, 20 months, and Lucy, 28 months, while Ms. Kendra is assisting Marshall, 28 months, with toileting. Mr. Chad scans the room and notices Nia, 24 months, standing tall on top of the table the toddlers use for eating and manipulative play. Mr. Chad anxiously calls to her, "Nia, get down! We don't climb on tables." Nia looks at Mr. Chad but doesn't move.

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*more about...climbing toddlers* 🔍

Toddlers are wired to try out their newly discovered skills. Once they have "tried them out" they want and need to practice them. Adventurers at heart, they constantly seek something different to try – adding a new move, or even an old move to the skill they are practicing. Soon, they will begin practicing another new motor skill. This self-directed exploration is an important part of a child's motor, cognitive and emotional development. Remember, toddlers are still learning what furnishings are used for. Your gentle guidance plus daily opportunities to practice skills will keep children safe, help them learn rules of behavior and support their development.

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why do toddlers climb on equipment not meant for climbing?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Acknowledge that children enjoy new challenges and receive satisfaction in the ability to do them.
- ★ Consider that children are wired to move. Learning is enhanced by experiences with the environment.
- ★ Tune in to what Nia is trying to communicate. She may be behaving inappropriately to get your attention.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How should I respond to Nia's and Marshall's inappropriate behavior?
- What can I do to help prevent climbing?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Help Nia off of the table for her safety.
- ▲ Give brief statements to help children understand necessary limits and offer appropriate choices. "I will not let you climb on the table. You may climb on the climber."
- ▲ Avoid threats. Acknowledge a child's interest in a new challenge. Guide a child's behavior to a similar activity.
- ▮ Resist the impulse to remove materials, including chairs, from the environment.
- ★ Adjust your expectations and supervision to align with each child's developing ability to control behavior.
- ▮ Keep in mind a toddler's level of development when creating the environment and expectations.
- ▲ Set up engaging, high interest activities for children to do during routine times. Help children get involved in exploration and learning before you become involved in interactions/routines with other children.
- ▲ Engage Nia and Marshall in play. Make eye contact often and talk with them about their activities.
- ▲ Calmly, briefly, firmly and frequently remind children of classroom rules.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- Why don't children respond to my limit-setting instructions?
- What are additional opportunities for active physical play?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that toddlers test boundaries and have not fully learned adult rules, expectations and the possible consequences of unsafe behavior. Keep in mind that even if toddlers know a rule, they may not yet have developed enough impulse control to follow the rule without adult reminders.
- ◆ Schedule outdoor active play twice a day. Dress children appropriately for the weather, adjusting outdoor time based on weather conditions.
- ▮ Allow frequent opportunities for safe and appropriate large muscle movement, including climbing and running, so children have interesting alternatives to using furniture to climb.

Put It All Together

Toddler 61



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Mr. Chad and Ms. Kendra care for an active group of toddlers. Lately, several of the children have been interested in climbing and tend to do it when the teachers are busy with routines. So the teachers decided to make changes to the environment, as well as with their supervision and interaction practices, so the children will avoid climbing on furnishings. The teachers wish their room was large enough for a small climber but it is too small to add one safely.

Mr. Chad is having a pretend meal with Jocelyn, 20 months, and Lucy, 18 months, in the dramatic play area. Ms. Kendra prepares new activities that may engage the toddlers while she is conducting routine care. Already this morning Nia, 24 months, needed reminding that climbing is not allowed on the table, so they know their additions of new materials will interest her. First Ms. Kendra sets out a basket of balls and a toddler-size basketball hoop which will provide active play.

Then Ms. Kendra creates tunnels out of four different size cardboard boxes by placing them on their sides with all ends open. She spaces them near one another but doesn't connect them so children can leave and enter the tunnel at any point. Ms. Kendra specifically shows the tunnels to Nia since she particularly enjoys active play.

"Mr. Chad and I have something special for you to do. We made these tunnels for you and your friends to crawl through. You can play in the tunnels." Ms. Kendra points to a tunnel opening and says, "You crawl through." She stays a minute to watch and help Nia engage in play if necessary before continuing with the toileting routine.

Nia is excited as she finds her way through the tunnels. She discovers she needs to crouch down in the lower boxes and can keep her head higher in the taller boxes. Mr. Chad, still having his pretend meal, catches Nia's eye and says, "Nia, you crawl quickly through the tunnel." She smiles and replies, "I go in tunnel," turns and back through the tunnel she goes. When Nia pops out the other end she eagerly says, "Here I am." Mr. Chad responds, "You made it through the whole tunnel!" This interaction is repeated a few more times.

Marshall, 28 months, through with toileting runs to join Nia. Giggling, they start through the tunnels. Nia then lies up against the tunnel which collapses, Marshall plops beside her on the tunnel. Mr. Chad approaches them and says, "When you lie on the tunnel, it falls down. If you crawl through it, it will stay up." He helps them up and says, "Nia, can you follow Marshall through the tunnel?" This suggestion helps the children re-engage in play.

Mr. Chad and Ms. Kendra will keep a close eye on the toddlers when they are through playing with the tunnel and help redirect them to an appropriate activity if necessary. The basketball hoop and balls will give them an active play choice until it is time for the children to go outdoors for playtime. There is not room for the tunnels to stay out all of the time, but they will be added to the environment frequently.



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the movements of his or her body in order to move and to interact with the environment.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will understand how things move and fit in space.



### Social Development:

The child will have an awareness of his or her relationship to others in a group.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## Throwing

### Watch



Cochise, 26 months, is playing in the manipulative area with Tyler, 22 months, and their family child care teacher, Ms. Tala. Each child is playing with different manipulatives laid out on the table. Tyler is putting shapes into a shape sorter and is having some difficulty with one of the shapes. Frustrated, he throws the shape block across the table, almost hitting Cochise.

"Tyler, don't throw that. You almost hit Cochise," says Ms. Tala returning the shape block to him. Tyler attempts to put the same shape into the sorter again. Still not being able to find the correct hole, he throws the shape again. Ms. Tala responds, "Tyler, throwing is not a choice." Guiding Tyler from the table over into the open play space, Ms. Tala says, "Since you can't stop throwing, you need to go play with something else." Ms. Tala returns to the table to continue her play with Cochise.

Tyler looks around the room trying to decide what to play with next. He sees the balls stored in a basket and throws one across the room. Ms. Tala responds, "Tyler, don't throw the ball in the house. You could break something. Why don't you play with the train?" Tyler looks around and walks to the window.

“With your support and appropriate materials, I am learning to control my emotions.”



## Watch



Cochise, 26 months, is playing in the manipulative area with Tyler, 22 months, and their family child care teacher, Ms. Tala. Each child is playing with different manipulatives laid out on the table. Tyler is putting shapes into a shape sorter and is having some difficulty with one of the shapes. Frustrated, he throws the shape block across the table, almost hitting Cochise.

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*more about...appropriate materials* 🔍

*Infants and toddlers develop skills in their own way and at their own pace. It is for these reasons that care teachers need to continually observe each child and record the child's interests, skills the child is practicing, and new skills that are emerging. Select materials that offer children the opportunity to make discoveries, that can be used in different ways, and that encourage children to participate and engage in problem solving. Select materials that support a child's current and emerging skills and interests to enhance that child's emotional, motor (muscle) and cognitive development. Your interaction during children's play and learning contributes to their social and language/communication development as well.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How can I help Tyler cope with his frustration?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Observe what is causing Tyler's frustration.
- ▲ Name and validate Tyler's emotions to help him learn to identify his feelings. In this example, Tyler appears to be upset that he cannot get the shape to fit in the shape sorter.
- ★ Acknowledge the child's desire to throw objects and give him an appropriate choice for throwing things such as tossing bean bags in a bucket.
- ▲ Clearly and firmly state what a child can or cannot do. "Tyler, do not throw the block. Try to put the block in the hole that I showed you."
- ▲ Offer assistance, but do not take over the task. Allow Tyler to make the discoveries and experience success.
- ▮ Choose developmentally appropriate materials. Select a shape sorter with fewer shapes for Tyler to practice his current skills. Once he has mastered it on several occasions, provide a more complex shape sorter. Add other materials to the environment, such as variety of puzzles and pegs/pegboard for various skill levels, so children can practice similar skills.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I help Tyler make appropriate choices for play?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Acknowledge that children benefit from learning when they choose experiences that are of interest to them and that meet their current and emerging skills.
- ▮ Provide materials toddlers are permitted to use. Since one of the functions of balls is to be thrown, but they are not allowed to be thrown in the home, store balls where children do not have access to them inside. Use the balls outside where toddlers are free to experiment with the different functions of a ball. Provide balls that are soft, so children who are accidentally hit won't be hurt.
- ▲ Help Tyler engage in play. Ask what he is interested in doing, help him get settled into play and provide ongoing interaction by talking with him, sitting near him or by joining him in his play.

Put It All Together

Toddler 65



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Cochise, 26 months, is playing in the manipulative area with Tyler, 22 months, and their family child care teacher, Ms. Tala. Each child is playing with different manipulatives laid out on the table. Tyler is putting shapes into a shape sorter and is having some difficulty with one of the shapes. Frustrated, he throws the shape block across the table and onto the floor, almost hitting Cochise.

Ms. Tala, sitting across the table from Tyler, looks him in the eyes and calmly, firmly says, "Tyler, you are frustrated that the block won't fit. But I won't allow you to throw blocks. May I help you?" Tyler holds her gaze then looks at the shape sorter. He then selects a shape and attempts to fit it into the matching space. Ms. Tala points to another shape and suggests to Tyler that he try to fit the shape in it. He tries and it works. When the shape falls in, Tyler smiles and looks at Ms. Tala who responds, "The shapes match!" Tyler reaches for another shape and once again attempts to find the correct space as Ms. Tala suggests he try different shapes in the sorter until he finds the correct one. He smiles and says, "Me did it." Ms. Tala replies, "Yes you did!"

Since Tyler has calmed down and feels good about his success Ms. Tala says, "Tyler, please pick up the shape on the floor. Let's see if we can find where it goes." He runs to pick up the thrown shape and eagerly looks for the correct space. Ms. Tala decides she will bring out the shape sorter with fewer shapes from storage since it better fits Tyler's skill level. Cochise enjoys the more complex shape sorter so she will keep it accessible for him to use.



### Emotional Development:

The child will manage his or her behavior.



### Motor Development:

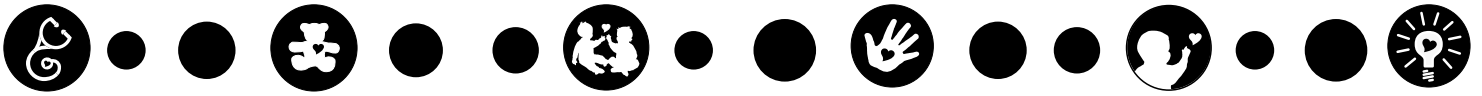
The child will coordinate the use of his or her hands, fingers and sight in order to manipulate objects in the environment.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize his or her ability to things.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Biting...How to Stop It*

### **Watch**



Family child care teacher, Ms. Barbara, is helping Dane, 3 years old, set up the paint supplies at the art easel. Simone and Monica, both 28 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. Ms. Barbara provides a variety of dramatic play accessories, including a baby doll, a baby bottle, a plush animal, a baby blanket, a couple of pots, plates, cups, and one large spoon. Ms. Barbara reminded Simone and Monica about taking turns with the materials when they first got out the dramatic play items.

Standing at the table, Simone is wrapping her baby doll in a blanket. Monica picks up the plush animal and the baby bottle. Simone, seeing Monica pick up the baby bottle, reaches over to take the bottle away from her. In response, Monica bites Simone on the back of her hand.

Ms. Barbara hears Simone's scream and looks up from the art area. She rushes over and says, "We don't bite! Monica, you need to be nice to your friends. If you can't play together with the toys, I'll have to put them away." Ms. Barbara looks at Simone's hand and kindly says, "It doesn't look too bad. She didn't break the skin. You will be OK." Ms. Barbara takes the baby doll and bottle with her as she returns to the art area.

“ I can't protect myself from being bitten. I depend on you to keep me safe. ”



## Watch



Family child care teacher, Ms. Barbara, is helping Dane, 3 years old, set up the paint supplies at the art easel. Simone and Monica, both 28 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. Ms. Barbara provides a variety of dramatic play accessories, including a baby doll, a baby bottle, a plush animal, a baby blanket, a couple of pots, plates, cups, and one large spoon. Ms. Barbara reminded Simone and Monica about taking turns with the materials when they first got out the dramatic play items.

Standing at the table, Simone is wrapping her baby doll in a blanket. Monica picks up the plush animal and the baby bottle. Simone, seeing Monica pick up the baby bottle, reaches over to take the bottle away from her. In response, Monica bites Simone on the back of her hand.

Ms. Barbara hears Simone's scream and looks up from the art area. She rushes over and says, "We don't bite! Monica, you need to be nice to your friends. If you can't play together with the toys, I'll have to put them away." Ms. Barbara looks at Simone's hand and kindly says, "It doesn't look too bad. She didn't break the skin. You will be OK." Ms. Barbara takes the baby doll and bottle with her as she returns to the art area.

*more about...purposeful biting*

*There are many reasons why toddlers bite. They may bite to get what they want or to keep what they have. They may also bite out of frustration. For example, they may not have the language skills necessary to communicate their wants and needs. The ability to control impulses is only beginning to develop during toddlerhood. An older toddler may occasionally be able to control impulses, but not consistently. Additionally, toddlers are in the process of learning how to engage in cooperative play. So instead of taking turns to resolve a conflict, they may bite. As toddlers' motor skills are still developing, room arrangement can also impact their actions, including biting. For example, they may have trouble navigating through learning areas or through crowded or cluttered pathways. Observing and understanding why a toddler is biting will assist you in developing a plan and taking action to reduce biting incidents.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How can I reduce biting incidents?
- How can I help Monica and Simone learn to play together with less conflict?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that young children are beginning to develop the ability to control their impulses and to self-regulate their behavior.
- ★ Consider each child's temperament. Children react differently to similar situations based on their temperament.
- ★ Keep in mind that older toddlers are just beginning to learn to take turns, but may not be able to wait for their turn consistently.
- ▲ Acknowledge that it is the care teacher's responsibility to keep all children safe.
- ▮ Provide duplicates of popular toys to reduce conflicts over play materials. Observe when children's interests change and rotate and change the types and quantity of play materials as needed.
- ▲ Recognize that talking with toddlers about taking turns isn't enough. Stay close by to supervise and facilitate interactions between Simone and Monica.
- ▮ Create an environment that gives toddlers plenty of room to play and move about easily. Place play materials in learning areas throughout the environment to prevent crowding.
- ★ Recognize that toddlers usually focus on "me" and often seek instant gratification. They want what they want, when they want it.
- ▲ Join in play with the children. It helps them learn how to play with each other.
- ▲ Help children solve problems by encouraging them to figure out solutions together. Accept and help them try out their ideas.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- What are the most effective ways to respond to this situation?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Comfort Simone, the injured child, immediately and affirm her reactions.
- ▲ Wash the bitten area, even if the skin is not broken, and follow recommended first-aid procedures.
- ▲ Talk with Monica after attending to Simone's emotional and physical needs. Talk briefly and calmly about what she did, describing the impact the bite had on Simone. Use language that is appropriate for the age of the child. Return to comforting Simone after talking with Monica.
- ▲ Allow toddlers to continue to play with toys instead of removing them from the children's area. Suggest alternative items that may serve as substitutes such as plush animals for a baby doll or a cup for a bottle.
- ▲ Complete the required paperwork for this type of situation. Maintain confidentiality as you share incident details with families. Provide resources related to biting to families.

Put It All Together

Toddler 69



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Family child care teacher, Ms. Barbara, is helping Dane, 3 years, set up the paint supplies at the art easel. Simone and Monica, both 28 months, are playing in the dramatic play area. Ms. Barbara provides a variety of dramatic play accessories, including a baby doll, a baby bottle, a plush animal, a baby blanket, a couple of pots, plates, cups, and one large spoon. Ms. Barbara reminded Simone and Monica about taking turns with the materials when they first got out the dramatic play items. During play with the children, Ms. Barbara has been modeling and talking about taking turns. Knowing this is a new concept for older toddlers, she doesn't expect them to consistently take turns.

While observing Simone and Monica, Ms. Barbara sees that both are interested in the baby bottle. Simone, who is holding the baby doll, says, "My bottle," and reaches for the bottle in Monica's hand. Ms. Barbara calmly calls to Simone, "Simone, Monica has the bottle. Why don't you use a cup for your baby?" Ms. Barbara says this in order to create a pause in the toddlers' interaction until she can reach them to facilitate their play.

Ms. Barbara sits very close to the girls. Simone does not choose the cup as Ms. Barbara suggested. Ms. Barbara restates Simone's request, "You want the bottle. Tell Monica, 'I want the bottle.'" Simone repeats her request.

Anticipating that Monica will say no, Ms. Barbara leans in thinking that Simone may try to take Monica's bottle. Monica replies, "No!" Ms. Barbara says to Simone, "She told you 'no,' you can't have the bottle." Simone starts to cry and jump up and down. Ms. Barbara says, "That made you upset. I can help you find something else to use as a bottle. I see a plate, spoon and cup. Which one would you like to use?" Simone yells, "I want the bottle."

Ms. Barbara knows that Simone is unlikely to accept her suggestion, so she changes her approach. Recognizing the toddlers' interest in feeding babies, she redirects the focus of their play to see if they can cooperate instead of compete for the same item. She says to Simone, "I wonder if Monica would like to help you give your baby a bottle? You hold your baby, and Monica can hold her bottle. Let's see if that will work."

The toddlers look at each other as Ms. Barbara says, "Monica, Simone's baby is hungry. The baby wants a bottle." Monica puts the bottle to the baby's mouth. She smiles at Simone who smiles back. Ms. Barbara stays close, comments on the girls' cooperation as they feed the baby together. Soon Monica loses interest and hands the bottle to Simone. Monica goes to the art easel to paint near Dane. Ms. Barbara accompanies Monica to help her get prepared to paint.

Ms. Barbara makes a mental note to get more dolls and bottles for the dramatic play area to support the children's interest in feeding babies. Then, recognizing that she just barely prevented a biting incident, she decides to do some reading on toddler biting. She knows it is her responsibility to keep finding ways to prevent biting from occurring.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize herself or himself as a person with an identity, wants, needs, interests, likes and dislikes.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will convey a message or transfer information to another person.



### Social Development:

The child will engage with other children.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Biting... Talking with Families*

### **Watch**



Toddler teacher, Mr. Glen, is reading to Celeste, 24 months, Declan, 20 months, and Cora, 30 months. The children like when Mr. Glen reads the books that they choose. They each also like to hold their selected book until Mr. Glen is ready for the next book.

Mr. Glen says to Celeste, "Your nose is running. Let's get a tissue before we read the next book." Celeste puts her book on the floor and walks toward the sink where the tissues are kept. Mr. Glen says to Declan and Cora, "We'll be right back after I quickly help Celeste." While Celeste is being cared for, Declan takes Celeste's book and flips through the pages. After washing her hands, Celeste runs back to her book and notices Declan is looking at it. She grabs the book but Declan doesn't let go. Celeste then bites him on the shoulder, causing Declan to cry and drop the book. Celeste quickly grabs the book and holds onto it tightly.

Mr. Glen hears the cry on his way back and asks, "What's wrong?" Cora declares, "Celeste bit Declan." Mr. Glen asks Celeste, "Did you bite Declan?" Celeste replies, "No." Mr. Glen notices the swollen, red area and teeth marks on Declan's shoulder. He responds, "Celeste, biting is not OK. You hurt your friend." Mr. Glen kindly says to Declan, "Come on, let me take a look at your shoulder." Declan, still crying, holds Mr. Glen's hand and walks to the sink.

At pick-up time, Mr. Glen tells Celeste's aunt that Celeste bit a child today and she needs to sign the incident report. Celeste's aunt apologizes for Celeste's behavior and then asks, "How did it happen, weren't you watching her?" He answers, "I was, but I can't always stop toddlers from biting." Celeste's aunt says, "But that is your job," as she and Celeste walk out the door.

Next Mr. Glen talks to Declan's dad. He looks at his son's wound and says to Mr. Glen, "Isn't there any way you can stop this? We don't bring him here to get hurt." Mr. Glen quietly responds, "I'm trying my best."

“ Treat my family with respect. Understand they are upset because they trusted you to take good care of me. ”



## Watch



Toddler teacher, Mr. Glen, is reading to Celeste, 24 months, Declan, 20 months, and Cora, 30 months. The children like when Mr. Glen reads the books that they choose. They each also like to hold their selected book until Mr. Glen is ready for the next book.

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Next Mr. Glen talks to Declan's dad. He looks at his son's wound and says to Mr. Glen, "Isn't there any way you can stop this? We don't bring him here to get hurt." Mr. Glen quietly responds, "I'm trying my best."

*more about...talking with families  
about biting*

*Maintaining a trusting relationship with families is crucial to providing respectful care for their children. The way you talk with a family member about biting incidents can have a big effect on teacher-family relationships. Families want to trust that you are caring for their children at all times and that you are diligent in keeping them safe. They want you to have the knowledge and skills to know why biting occurs and to actively use strategies to prevent it. Family members also need assurance that you are empathetic and know how their child, in particular, likes to be comforted when in distress. It is essential that you respect them as the most important people in the child's life, and acknowledge their concern. Taking responsibility for actions that occur is part of a care teacher's role.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why has Celeste resorted to biting?
- What could I have done to reduce the chance of a biting incident?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Understand that toddlers may engage in purposeful biting when attempting to get something or to change the outcome of a situation.
- ★ Keep in mind that biting is a typical part of development, though not all children bite.
- ★ Recognize that toddlers are just beginning to develop their ability to control their impulses and self-regulate their behavior.
- ★ Consider that Celeste may not have yet developed the skills needed to communicate needs in these types of situations.
- ▲ Be proactive. Anticipate that Celeste will want her specially chosen book back. To prevent the problem from occurring, ask Declan to give you the book to hold until Celeste returns to the group.
- ▲ Closely supervise toddlers who may have a tendency to engage in biting.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How should I respond to biting incidents that I didn't observe?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Provide comfort and care for the child who was bitten.
- ★ Acknowledge that it is not appropriate to expect children to report what happened and who was involved. Toddlers are not reliable witnesses.
- ▲ Do not assume to know who is responsible for incidents you do not see happen.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- What strategies can I use to talk with families about biting incidents?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Share openly and honestly with families how the child got injured. Maintain confidentiality.
- ▲ Take responsibility. It is the care teacher's job to keep children safe from harm.
- ▲ Call family members after the incident occurs to inform them about it. This will give family members time to process the information before picking up their child.
- ▲ Avoid threatening families with suspension over typical developmental behaviors such as biting.
- ▲ Explain to families what you will do to reduce the chance of this happening again.

Put It All Together

Toddler 73



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Toddler teacher, Mr. Glen, is reading to Celeste, 24 months, Declan, 20 months, and Cora, 30 months. The children like Mr. Glen to read books that each of them chooses. They also like to hold their books until Mr. Glen is ready for the next book.

Mr. Glen says to Celeste, "Your nose is running. Let's get a tissue before we read the next book." He says to Declan and Cora, "We'll be right back after I quickly help Celeste." While Celeste is being cared for, Declan takes Celeste's book and is flipping through the pages. After washing her hands, Celeste runs back to her book and notices Declan looking at it. Mr. Glen is right behind Celeste and sees Declan with the book. Mr. Glen calls to Celeste, "Celeste, I will get the book from Declan for you." But Celeste leans forward and bites Declan on the shoulder.

Mr. Glen reaches out to comfort Declan who is crying. He says, "That hurt, Declan. I am sorry that Celeste hurt you." Mr. Glen cares for Declan's wound and patiently comforts him. Mr. Glen firmly says to Celeste, "I will not allow you to bite Declan. Biting hurts." Mr. Glen returns his attention to Declan until Declan is ready to reengage in play.

Mr. Glen completes incident reports to share with both families. For Celeste's family, he writes in the report that Celeste hurt another child, explains how he responded to the incident, what he is going to do to prevent future biting incidents, and how he will help Celeste learn new skills to use in similar situations. For Declan's family, he writes similar information along with a commitment to be vigilant about protecting Declan from future biting incidents. Then, Mr. Glen calls each family to let them know ahead of time the information in the incident reports.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will demonstrate interest in book reading, story telling and singing and will eventually understand the meaning of basic symbols.



### Social Development:

The child will engage with other children.



### Emotional Development:

The child will express feelings through facial expressions, gestures and sounds.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## Why Won't They...Participate in Group Time?

### Watch



The toddlers in Mr. Cody's and Ms. Natasha's classroom just came inside from the playground. Mr. Cody tells all of the children to sit on the carpet in the center of the room for group time. Samara, 21 months, sits near a toy shelf instead and starts playing with a wooden peg stacking set. Mr. Cody calls to Samara saying, "Samara, it is time to put that away. Come sit with us, we are going to have group time." Samara doesn't respond to Mr. Cody and keeps playing with her toy.

Mr. Cody approaches Samara and gently takes the toy from her and puts it on the shelf. He holds her hand saying, "It is group time." Samara starts crying and walks with Mr. Cody to the carpet. Mr. Cody starts group time by asking the children to stand up and stretch their arms to the ceiling; then bend to the right and left. When Samara doesn't participate, Mr. Cody kindly says, "Samara, stand up and stretch." Samara shakes her head no and continues to cry. Mr. Cody decides not to upset Samara more and lets her stay seated. When they are done stretching, Mr. Cody begins reading *Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?* by Dr. Seuss.

Rihanna, 27 months, quickly loses interest. She begins to wiggle and fidget, accidentally kicking her neighbor in the back. Mr. Cody stops reading and tells Rihanna, "Stop kicking your friend and sit still please." Rihanna stops kicking, but not interested in the story, she continues to look around the room.

In the meantime, Samara has gotten a book off of the shelf next to her. Mr. Cody asks his co-teacher, Ms. Natasha, to sit with Samara and help her put her book away while he finishes group time. Mr. Cody is finally able to finish reading the book, though two more children have become distracted by the other children's behavior, and by the stopping and starting of group time activities. Mr. Cody ends group time early by singing a song.

“ I like to make my own discoveries through experiences I choose. Group time is not right for me. ”



## Watch



The toddlers in Mr. Cody's and Ms. Natasha's classroom just came inside from the playground. Mr. Cody tells all of the children to sit on the carpet in the center of the room for group time. Samara, 21 months, sits near a toy shelf instead and starts playing with a wooden peg stacking set. Mr. Cody calls to Samara saying, "Samara, it is time to put that away. Come sit with us, we are going to have group time." Samara doesn't respond to Mr. Cody and keeps playing with her toy.

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## more about...group time



*Young children are curious learners and little scientists at work. They are eager to have hands-on experiences with a variety of interesting materials to manipulate and mouth. Their focus is on doing things they choose to do, when they choose to do them, and on having responsive care teachers to interact and celebrate their discoveries with. This is how young children are wired to learn. Teacher-directed group times (circle times) are not developmentally appropriate for young children and they should not be expected to participate in preschool activities. Young children have not yet developed the necessary skills to participate in group time such as sitting still and turn taking. Most importantly, young children are active learners who learn by doing. Children rely on you to provide appropriate materials, safe spaces, positive interaction and responsive care teaching to further their development. By doing these things, you will be preparing them for the learning that lies ahead.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why won't the toddlers sit still and participate in group time?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that young children gradually develop the ability to participate in teacher-led activities. Keep in mind that toddlers are not able to and it is inappropriate to expect them to participate in preschool experiences such as group time.
- ★ Consider that toddlers are usually interested in doing things they choose to do and are learning while they do them.
- ★ Understand that young children learn best through unstructured play, adult and peer interactions, and child-directed experiences.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I ensure that children have rich learning experiences?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that learning is most beneficial to toddlers when they are free to make choices and explore their interests.
- ★ Assess how play and learning experiences and materials support child development, current and emerging skills and how they encourage children to explore and make discoveries.
- ▲ Create various opportunities for children to pursue their interests, allowing ample time for them to make discoveries throughout the day. By using a peg stacking set, Samara learns about spatial relations and grouping and categorizing. Supply Samara with other types of peg stacking sets to extend her learning.
- ▲ Provide learning choices such as play with art materials, sensory experiences, active play, and outdoor play throughout the day. Be available to interact with children in multiple learning areas.
- ▲ Allow children to come and go from experiences as they choose.
- ◆ Avoid requiring children to follow external, adult-directed experiences. Respect children's choices and follow their lead and interests.

Put It All Together

Toddler 77



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

The toddlers in Mr. Cody's and Ms. Natasha's classroom just came inside from the playground. After washing their hands, the children have free play. Mr. Cody set out, on a table, four trays of sand (prepared before the children arrived this morning) and accessories such as large wooden craft sticks, small toy insects/animals/cars, sea shells, small shovels, and bowls/cups. Ms. Natasha, before going outside for play, covered another table in drawing paper and laid out an assortment of crayons. She also displayed a few "new" books on top of a toy shelf by setting the books up to help catch the toddlers' attention. These "new" books are books that are occasionally rotated into use for two weeks at a time.

Knowing that toddlers learn best when engaged in experiences they choose themselves, and that toddlers have short and varying attention spans, the children are free to come and go to different experiences as they wish. The teachers ensure that there are a variety of materials throughout the room to engage children in a variety of experiences, explorations and discoveries.

Mr. Cody sits with the children experimenting with sand play. He closely supervises them due to the higher risk of injury and sanitary issues. He positions himself at the table so he can observe children at play throughout the room. Ms. Natasha supervises and interacts with the children at the drawing table and those engaged in other play experiences around the room.

Samara, 21 months, chooses to play with the wooden peg stacking set. After a few minutes, she notices Mr. Cody and the other children at the sand trays. Rushing over, she squeezes herself into a space to play, but all of the sand trays are occupied. Mr. Cody says, "Samara, all of the sand trays are being used. You can watch and wait for a turn or I'll help you find something else to do." Samara says, "Play sand." Mr. Cody replies, "Sand table is full. Do you want to draw with Ms. Natasha?" pointing at the art table. Samara says, "No!" Mr. Cody says, "Do you want to get a new book on the shelf for us to look at?" Mr. Cody points to the new books. Samara hurries to get a book and brings it back to Mr. Cody who looks at it with her while interacting with the children at the sand table.

Rihanna, 27 months, is a very active child. She chooses to draw standing up instead of sitting down. Ms. Natasha sees Rihanna looking around the room after a couple minutes of drawing. Ms. Natasha re-engages with Rihanna and says, "You drew with a black crayon." Rihanna looks at the drawing and crayon and says, "Now color with green," as she draws with a yellow crayon. Ms. Natasha replies, "You drew a squiggly yellow line." Rihanna answers, "Yes, with yellow."

Rihanna draws a few more squiggles before playing with the sand trays, which Samara is now engaged with.



### Emotional Development:

The child will manage his or her behavior.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will demonstrate interest in writing and will develop the fine motor abilities required to hold a writing tool and make marks on a surface.



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the use of his or her hands, fingers and sight in order to manipulate objects in the environment.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Why Won't They...Stay on Their Cots at Nap Time?*

### **Watch**



It is nap time for family child care teacher Ms. Rosaline's toddlers. Bringing the children in from outdoor play, she leads them to the restroom to toilet and washes their hands before nap. Ava, 20 months, lies down on her cot with her favorite blanket and waits for Ms. Rosaline to cover her up. Hunter, 21 months, dashes to the toy shelves and looks around scouting out what he wants to do next.

Ms. Rosaline tells Hunter, "It is nap time not playtime." She holds out her hand, which he takes and she escorts him to his cot. She covers him up, hands him his plush toy tiger and stroking his hair says, "Have a good nap." Next, she covers up Ava who is already drifting off to sleep. When she turns, she notices Hunter is off of his cot. She leads him back to the cot, covers him up again and rubs his back to help him relax. Believing he is ready to sleep, she leaves his side to work on her lesson plans. In less than 5 minutes, Hunter is sitting up with the blanket over his head singing a song. Once again, Ms. Rosaline says, "Hunter you need to lie down." She tucks him back in then sits on the floor next to him working on her lesson plans until he finally goes to sleep.

In an hour and a half, Ava awakes, goes to Ms. Rosaline and asks, "Snack?" Ms. Rosaline replies, "Hi, Ava. You're awake. No, it isn't snack time, it is still nap time. You need to go lie down." She takes Ava back to her cot and covers her up. After a few minutes, Ava sits up and says, "I awake," and gets up off of her cot. "Ava, it is still nap time, you have to stay on your cot. Here, you can have a book to look at," says Ms. Rosaline leading Ava back to her cot again. Ms. Rosaline continues to encourage Ava to stay on her cot until nap time is over.

“ Making sure I get to rest and play when I need to helps me grow and learn. ”



## Watch



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## more about...use of cots

Cots and sleeping mats are to be used for rest and naps, not for other purposes. It doesn't benefit them nor is it developmentally appropriate to expect toddlers to sit or lie and be quiet if they are awake and ready for play. Even though children may be allowed to have a book or a quiet toy while sitting on their cot, teachers must consider whether the activity is meeting the learning needs, interests and freedom of choice that facilitates children's learning. Also, toddlers awake on cots disturb other toddlers who need to sleep and result in teachers having to give children more guidance and supervision. Inappropriate behavior can be prevented if children who are not sleepy are allowed to use an area of the room for quiet play in order to make the most of their learning opportunities.

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- What are effective ways to help children prepare for nap time?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Understand that nap time should be individualized to a child's need for sleep.
- ◆ Recognize that any activity, whether a quiet type of play or an active type of experience like outdoor large motor play, is suitable before nap time transitions.
- ◆ Consider that transitional routines need to occur between learning experiences and when children lie down for nap.
- ◆ Establish predictable routines and transitions by carrying them out the same way each time so children can anticipate what will happen next.
- ◆ Implement transitional routines. Have toddlers lay out their bedding and security object (teddy bear, blankie), offer a quiet book to children who are interested, or play quiet, soothing music in a cozy area where children can rest before transitioning to their cots.
- ◆ Create a restful and safe environment. Dim lights. Stay where you can easily keep all children in sight. Reduce noise, provide sheets, pillows (if age appropriate), blankets, and a safe and comfortable mat or cot.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I meet the napping needs of each individual child?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Consider a child's typical nap schedule, but also consider the child's experience that day. Did Hunter go to bed late the night before? Did Hunter sleep in this morning? Did Ava wake earlier than usual? Is Ava showing signs/cues of sleepiness, such as yawning, rubbing her eyes, irritability?
- ▮ Provide quiet play choices for toddlers who are not showing signs of sleepiness.
- ◆ Offer comfort and help children relax by sitting with them, rubbing their back, stroking their hair, and softly singing a song. Each child has preferences on how they like to drift to sleep; match your actions to their preferences.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- What should early risers do?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Understand that toddlers differ from one another in the amount of sleep they need.
- ◆ Permit toddlers to remain on their cots while they transition from sleep to an awake state until they are ready to engage in their environment.
- ◆ Allow toddlers to leave their cots when they are awake and ready.
- ▮ Offer quiet materials and experiences for children to do while other children sleep. Encourage children to look at books, draw, and use manipulatives, if they are interested.

Put It All Together

Toddler 81



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Family child care teacher Ms. Rosaline's toddlers are outside for active play after lunch, which is part of their typical routine. After 30 minutes, she notices Ava, 20 months, is rubbing her eyes, seated on the ride-on vehicle but not riding it. On the other hand, Hunter, 21 months, is zooming around the sidewalk with his ride-on vehicle.

Ms. Rosaline asks Ava, "Ava, are you tired? Do you want to sit on my lap?" Ava nodding her head yes, sits on Ms. Rosaline's lap while they watch Hunter make two laps on his vehicle. Ms. Rosaline says, "Hunter, in 2 minutes we are going inside." She addresses Ava, "Let's let Hunter make a few more trips up and down the sidewalk, then we will go in and get ready for nap." After 2 minutes, Ms. Rosaline tells the toddlers, "When we go inside, Hunter, I would like you to wash your hands first then you can choose something quiet to play with. Then Ava, I will help you get ready for nap."

Hunter washes his hands with Ms. Rosaline. She asks, "Hunter, what do you want to play with that is quiet?" Hunter says, "I play with train." She replies, "The train sounds fun, but it needs to be a quiet train so Ava can sleep." Hunter dashes to the wooden train. Ava toilets and washes her hands with Ms. Rosaline who says, "Ava, you look sleepy. Do you want to look at a book before lying down?" Ava relies, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear," referring to *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. and Eric Carle.

Before reading the book, Ms. Rosaline asks Ava to get her blanket and plush kitty out of her cubby while Ms. Rosaline lays out Ava's cot and checks on Hunter. Ava tosses her blanket on her cot and curls up in Ms. Rosaline's lap with her plush kitty to read the book. Ms. Rosaline, noticing Ava becoming very relaxed, tells Ava after the story, "Ava, you look so sleepy; let's get you comfy on your cot." Ms. Rosaline covers Ava up, strokes her hair and wishes her sweet dreams.

Ms. Rosaline joins Hunter and asks, "May I play with you?" Hunter says, "Yes," and hands her a train. Hunter says, "My train goes on track. Goes 'choo-choo.' Your train goes 'choo-choo.'" Ms. Rosaline, driving her train, says very quietly, "Choo-choo." While keeping an eye on Ava, she notices Hunter is showing signs of tiredness. "Hunter, you look like you are getting sleepy. Let's drive the train to your cubby and get your blanket." Hunter drives his train to his cubby, parks it to retrieve after nap, and takes his blanket and pillow to his cot. Ms. Rosaline covers him up, rubs his back and sings his favorite quiet time song, "Hush Little Baby." She sings it repeatedly until she can tell he has relaxed.

While supervising the sleeping children, Ms. Rosaline works on her lesson plans.

In an hour and a half, Ava awakes, goes to Ms. Rosaline and asks, "Snack?" Ms. Rosaline replies, "Hi, Ava. You're awake. What would you like to do before snack time with Hunter? You could draw or put together a puzzle." Ms. Rosaline asks because she knows Ava is aware of the routine of snack time after nap and wants to know if Ava is hungry or following the routine. Ava replies, "Puzzle," so she and Ms. Rosaline play with puzzles, and then play with lacing beads and magnet stackers. When Hunter wakes, Ava says she wants to eat with Hunter who shows interest in snack time.



### Physical Health:

The child will be exposed to and assisted with frequent and proper handwashing.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will convey a message or transfer information to another person.



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the use of his or her hands, fingers and sight in order to manipulate objects in the environment.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Why Won't They...Follow Directions?*

### **Watch**



Mr. Nathan and Ms. Deven care for a group of older toddlers. Since it is raining outside, the teachers are going to take the toddlers to the gym for active play. Concerned about safety and supervision issues, as well as believing that older toddlers should learn to follow directions, the teachers want the children to line up and move through the halls in an orderly manner.

Mr. Nathan stands at the door and says, "It's time to go to the gym everyone. Come and line up." Ms. Deven moves about the room helping children clean up and guides them to the door. Mr. Nathan says to the toddlers at the door as he guides them in place, "Use your ears and listen. We need to make a line."

As three toddlers join the group at the door, he helps them into line. While he's helping these children, other children move out of line. Jake, 26 months, wanders from the line to play with a truck. "Jake, come back here," calls Mr. Nathan. Jake continues pushing the truck. Mr. Nathan takes his hand and walks him back to the door. By now, most of the children are milling around. Mr. Nathan can't seem to keep them in a line and he is getting frustrated.

Once all the children are gathered at the door, Ms. Deven says, "Now listen; walk with one hand touching the wall while we walk to the gym." Once they get into the hall, the teachers make sure all the toddlers have one hand on the wall. Ms. Deven leads the group down the hall with Mr. Nathan walking behind them. After taking just a few steps, Jake walks away from the line and toward the hall window. "Jake, come back," says Mr. Nathan as he guides Jake back. While he's helping Jake, two other children move away from the line, but are still walking with the group. Mr. Nathan moves them back in line.

In the meantime, Abigail, 31 months, is running ahead. "Abigail, keep your hand on the wall," Ms. Deven tells her as she positions Abigail in line behind her. Abigail takes a few steps with her hand on the wall then leaves the line again and walks slightly in front of the group. Mr. Nathan calls to her, "Abigail, hand on the wall." Ms. Deven returns Abigail to the line. The group reaches the gym, and the teachers are disappointed and frustrated that the children didn't listen during the walk.

“ I can sometimes begin to follow directions when you keep my abilities in mind. ”



# Watch



Mr. Nathan and Ms. Deven care for a group of older toddlers. Since it is raining outside, the teachers are going to take the toddlers to the gym for active play. Concerned about safety and supervision issues, as well as believing that older toddlers should learn to follow directions, the teachers want the children to line up and move through the halls in an orderly manner.

Mr. Nathan stands at the door and says, "It's time to go to the gym everyone. Come and line up." Ms. Deven moves about the room helping children clean up and guides them to the door. Mr. Nathan says to the toddlers at the door as he guides them in place, "Use your ears and listen. We need to make a line."

As three toddlers join the group at the door, he helps them into line. While he's helping these children, other children move out of line. Jake, 26 months, wanders from the line to play with a truck. "Jake, come back here," calls Mr. Nathan. Jake continues pushing the truck. Mr. Nathan takes his hand and walks him back to the door. By now, most of the children are milling around. Mr. Nathan can't seem to keep them in a line and he is getting frustrated.

Once all the children are gathered at the door, Ms. Deven says, "Now listen; walk with one hand touching the wall while we walk to the gym." Once they get into the hall, the teachers make sure all the toddlers have one hand on the wall. Ms. Deven leads the group down the hall with Mr. Nathan walking behind them. After taking just a few steps, Jake walks away from the line and toward the hall window. "Jake, come back," says Mr. Nathan as he guides Jake back. While he's helping Jake, two other children move away from the line, but are still walking with the group. Mr. Nathan moves them back in line.

In the meantime, Abigail, 31 months, is running ahead. "Abigail, keep your hand on the wall," Ms. Deven tells her as she positions Abigail in line behind her. Abigail takes a few steps with her hand on the wall then leaves the line again and walks slightly in front of the group. Mr. Nathan calls to her, "Abigail, hand on the wall." Ms. Deven returns Abigail to the line. The group reaches the gym, and the teachers are disappointed and frustrated that the children didn't listen during the walk.

*more about...self-regulation*

*Often, one of the most challenging behaviors that care teachers experience in young children is their emerging ability to control their impulses, also known as self-regulation. Developing impulse control is part of a child's emotional developmental process and it continues well into their preschool years. Towards the end of the mobile infant stage, and into toddlerhood, children may be aware of a care teacher's expectation, but they may not have the ability to control their actions based on these expectations. Also remember, young children may control their behavior in one instance then not in the next. This is typical infant and toddler behavior. With appropriate guidance and support from responsive care teachers, and with repetition, supervision and patience, young children will begin to learn simple strategies to help themselves regulate their behavior.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- What are appropriate expectations concerning toddlers' ability to follow directions?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Acknowledge that toddlers are developing the ability to follow simple one-step directions.
- ★ Understand that toddlers are starting to develop the ability to manage their behavior and impulse control. These skills develop with age and teacher guidance.
- ★ Consider that the attention spans of toddlers are developing and that their attention shifts quickly from one thing to another.
- ★ Realize that attention spans differ among individuals and increase as a child ages.
- ★ Set appropriate expectations. Waiting turns and maintaining order is difficult for toddlers. These skills develop as children grow and are supported by appropriate care teaching.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I help toddlers understand what I would like them to do?
- How can I transition children from play to an organized walk to the gym?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Tell children individually rather than announcing the upcoming transition to the whole group. For example: "Jake, in 2 minutes we are walking to the gym."
- ▲ Keep comments brief and make eye contact with toddlers.
- ▲ Repeat directions.
- ▲ Prepare and complete teacher tasks before transitioning children.
- ▲ Avoid requiring children to line up. This is an inappropriate expectation for toddlers.
- ▲ Reduce the amount of time children spend waiting.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- How can I help toddlers begin to learn to follow simple directions?
- What are strategies I can use to walk us to the gym in a safe and appropriate way?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Show toddlers what you want them to do. Be a good role model.
- ▲ Offer opportunities for toddlers to learn to follow directions in an enjoyable way. For example, play Stop and Go, sing *If You're Happy and You Know It Clap Your Hands*, or other rhymes that have simple direction-like qualities. Toddlers may only partially follow a direction. That's OK, for they are still learning.
- ◆ Walk children to the gym in their primary groups, one group at a time.
- ▲ Engage toddlers in conversation. This may help them stay near you as well as support language development.
- ▲ Use the walk as a learning opportunity. Discuss what they see and hear.
- ★ Allow children to walk in a natural grouping. This supports peer interaction and may reduce conflicts.

Put It All Together

Toddler 85



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Mr. Nathan and Ms. Deven care for a group of older toddlers. Since it is raining outside, the teachers are going to take the toddlers to the gym for active play. Concerned about safety and supervision issues, the teachers walk the children to the gym in their primary groups since smaller groups of children are easier to manage. The teachers schedule the transition so Mr. Nathan's group will be in the gym before Ms. Deven's group begins their walk. That way, children aren't tempted to run to the other group of children causing safety and supervision issues.

Mr. Nathan tells each child in his primary group that they will be walking to the gym in 2 minutes. When it is time to leave, Mr. Nathan says to Jake, 26 months, "Jake, it is time to go to the gym. Do you want to tell Dakota it is time to go?" Jake asks, "Take my truck?" Mr. Nathan replies, "Sure you can." Jake hurries to Dakota with Mr. Nathan following.

Once Mr. Nathan gathers his primary group, he walks them into the hall. To keep them safe and their attention on moving to the gym, he breaks their walk into two parts. First they walk to the hall window. "What do we see outside?" Jake answers, "Bird." Mr. Nathan replies, "I see the little brown bird too. What is the bird doing?" After more comments, Mr. Nathan says, "Let's flap our arms like bird wings while we walk to the gym." He and the toddlers flap their arms as they walk. The children walk clustered together in a small group. Mr. Nathan keeps an eye on each of them as they "fly" to the gym. When he engages the toddlers in conversation, they tend to stay near him. If a child isn't interested in the "flying" activity, Mr. Nathan lets that child choose how to get safely to the gym, whether it is to just walk or move in another safe way.

In the meantime, Ms. Deven lets her primary group continue with the experiences they are engaged in. When it's time, Ms. Deven gathers and transitions her primary group in the same manner as Mr. Nathan. Knowing Abigail, 31 months, usually runs ahead during the walk, Ms. Deven reminds her, "Abigail, walk in the hall." Once in the hall, Abigail starts to run ahead. Ms. Deven calls to her calmly and firmly, "Abigail, stop. I want to walk with you. Come carry the toy bag." Abigail replies, "I'm going to gym." Ms. Deven replies, "We are too. Wait for us." Ms. Deven holds out the toy bag which Abigail comes back and gets.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will comprehend the message of another's communication.



### Emotional Development:

The child will manage his or her behavior



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize herself or himself as a person with an identity, wants, needs, interests, likes and dislikes.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Why Won't They...Keep Materials Where They Belong?*

### **Watch**



Care teacher Mr. Brennan is sitting with two toddlers playing at the sand table with small shovels, pails, a sand wheel and a sifter. Caroline, 34 months, joins her peers at the sand table with a dinosaur in her hand. Caroline sets her dinosaur in the sand and shovels sand on top of it. Mr. Brennan says nicely, "Caroline, the dinosaur doesn't go in the sand. Take it out, please." Caroline responds as she continues to shovel sand onto the dinosaur, "My dinosaur covered in sand." "But the dinosaur doesn't go here. It goes in the block area. Now it has to be washed," says Mr. Brennan as he pulls the dinosaur out of the sand and puts it into the soiled bin of toys. Caroline cries, "My dinosaur, give it back." "I'm sorry Caroline, it is dirty. Scoop sand into the bucket instead," answers Mr. Brennan.

Caroline says, "No, I want the dinosaur." Mr. Brennan kindly responds, "There are dinosaurs in the block area. You'll need to play over there if you want to play with one." Caroline hangs her head and walks away from the sand table. She settles into play in the block area choosing another dinosaur and making it stomp on the blocks.

As Caroline looks around the room, she notices Gabe, 31 months, and Christopher, 22 months, playing with the child-size kitchen set. She hurries to dramatic play area. Caroline sits the dinosaur in the toy kitchen sink and pretends to wash it. Mr. Brennan, seeing her calls, "Caroline, dinosaurs don't go in the kitchen. Play with the food like Gabe and Christopher." With a disappointed look on her face, she walks away.

“ I learn from playing with materials in all sorts of different ways. ”



## Watch



Care teacher Mr. Brennan is sitting with two toddlers playing at the sand table with small shovels, pails, a sand wheel and a sifter. Caroline, 34 months, joins her peers at the sand table with a dinosaur in her hand. Caroline sets her dinosaur in the sand and shovels sand on top of it. Mr. Brennan says nicely, "Caroline, the dinosaur doesn't go in the sand. Take it out, please." Caroline responds as she continues to shovel sand onto the dinosaur, "My dinosaur covered in sand." "But the dinosaur doesn't go here. It goes in the block area. Now it has to be washed," says Mr. Brennan as he pulls the dinosaur out of the sand and puts it into the soiled bin of toys. Caroline cries, "My dinosaur, give it back." "I'm sorry Caroline, it is dirty. Scoop sand into the bucket instead," answers Mr. Brennan.

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*more about...curiosity*

*Young children are naturally curious. They learn best when allowed freedom to safely act on their curiosity. Exploring and experimenting with a variety of objects in different ways and settings is one way to feed a child's curiosity. Children need the opportunity to make discoveries on their own, to see what works and how things work. Following their own curiosity informs children's thinking and shapes their learning and future development – even as adults. Advancements in science, technology, medicine, and education are dependent on persons following their curiosity and experimenting with materials in new and different ways. Encouraging curiosity is encouraging learning and discovery.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- Why do children like to use materials in other learning areas?
- How should I respond to Caroline's use of materials?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Acknowledge that children learn and find pleasure from experiences they create.
- ▮ Recognize that materials have multiple uses and each experience the child creates with the materials is important to support learning.
- ★ Keep in mind that children are using problem solving skills and learning about cause and effect, spatial relations, grouping and categorizing, and imitation when playing with different materials in a variety of settings.
- ★ Be aware that children may spend more time focusing on things they find interesting, which in turn may increase their ability to participate and persist in a task.
- ▲ Encourage children's interests, discoveries and creativity.
- ▲ Join in children's play. Talk about their ideas and ask questions.
- ▮ Offer a variety of materials that Caroline can use in play and learning opportunities in different areas of the room or setting.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How do I set limits on what materials can be used in specific learning areas?

### Give It a Try

- ▮ Set appropriate boundaries based on safety, health and what it takes to keep materials well maintained. Allow children to use plastic, vinyl and wood toy animals in sand and water play since they can be easily cleaned and sanitized. However, cloth dolls and plush animals may be damaged in sand and water play.
- ▲ Have only a few rules on how and where materials can be used. Having too many rules stifles a child's natural curiosity, which is the key to learning and development.

Put It All Together

Toddler 89



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Care teacher Mr. Brennan is sitting with two toddlers playing at the sand table. In two containers sitting at each end of the sand table are: a variety of toy vehicles, animals, people, nature objects, such as shells and pinecones, different-size containers, including small boxes and lids, and spoons/scoops as well as typical sand toys such as rakes, small shovels, pails, a sand wheel and sifter. All of the materials are an appropriate size for children to use in the sand table. Larger toys, such as bigger dump trucks and sand buckets, are used in the outdoor sandbox.

Caroline, 34 months, joins her peers at the sand table with a dinosaur in her hand. Caroline sets her dinosaur in the sand and shovels sand on top of it. Caroline says with confidence, "My dinosaur covered in sand." Mr. Brennan replies, "You scooped a big mound of sand on your brown dinosaur. I can only see its head now." Caroline takes a metal measuring cup full of sand and dumps it on the dinosaur's head. She looks at Mr. Brennan and giggles, "His head is gone." Mr. Brennan smiles and chuckles back, "You made the dinosaur disappear."

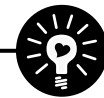
Caroline makes a roaring dinosaur sound while she pulls the dinosaur from beneath the sand. The dinosaur stomps through the sand making footprints. "Caroline, look at the dinosaur's footprints," says Mr. Brennan. She looks at the prints then pushes down harder on the dinosaur as it stomps making deeper prints, stopping occasionally to look at the tracks. "Dinosaur makes big steps," says Caroline. Mr. Brennan replies as he points to the big steps Caroline is referring to, "Those footprints are deep." She stomps the dinosaur through the sand making heavy and light footprint impressions until the dinosaur reaches the side of the sand table. She sets the dinosaur out of the sand table and chooses a small wood box with a lid and a measuring spoon. She proceeds to fill the box with sand, experimenting with different amounts of sand to discover if the lid fits or doesn't.

Once Caroline is finished with sand play, Mr. Brennan says, "Caroline, the dinosaur needs to be washed after being in the sand table. Please put it in the dirty toy bin and I'll wash it. You can choose another dinosaur for the block area if you want one."



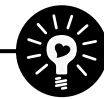
### Language & Communication Development:

The child will participate in interactions with language that follow the expected practices of the child's family and community.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will understand how things move and fit in space.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will understand how things move and fit in space.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Getting Ready for Preschool...Too Much To Do*

### **Watch**



Ms. Alana and Ms. Sally work in a toddler class with eight toddlers ages 20 months to 36 months. Many of the children have recently started to toilet train. Lately, it feels like their day is consumed with routines such as helping children toilet, letting them re-dress themselves after toileting, and serving and cleaning up at snack and lunch. The care teachers feel like there is so little time to prepare the toddlers for preschool when all their time is spent in routines and transitions.

The other day Mr. Ichiro, Micah's dad, asked Ms. Sally when they were going to start teaching the children their colors, letters, and counting. He wants to be sure Micah is prepared for preschool. Understanding Mr. Ichiro's concerns, they wonder when they will build these new activities into their busy day.

Ms. Sally and Ms. Alana have noticed that some of the two- and three-year-olds like to say, "I'm two!" or "I'm three!" and decide to add a counting activity to respond to the parent's request. The teachers gather the children together, giving each toddler objects to count. Micah, 24 months, gets three toy farm animals, Silas, 35 months, gets four toy cars and Jeremiah, 33 months, gets five blocks. The teachers count each object out loud, pointing to each one but the children are more interested in playing with the toys. By this time, Ms. Alana realizes Jeremiah should try and use the toilet and has him leave the counting activity. "Jeremiah, let's hurry so we don't miss counting," says Ms. Alana. Ms. Sally tries to get their attention and attempts to repeat the activity three more times. But Micah and Silas have lost interest and Ms. Sally realizes it is time for the next activity. Before she forgets, Ms. Sally writes a note to Mr. Ichiro letting him know they practiced counting.

“ I have to learn like a toddler before I can learn like a preschooler. ”



## Watch



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*more about...preschool readiness* 

*Being a toddler care teacher is about supporting toddler development; not about preparing toddlers to be preschoolers. The knowledge and thinking skill that children build during the first three years of life prepare them to continue to learn during the preschool years and become ready for school. So instead of thinking, "There is too much to do to get ready for preschool," think of it as, "Toddlers are scientists at work," and lay the foundation for future learning by supporting them in opportunities to explore, participate in their care, and share meaningful communication with others.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- What are the most important things I can do to prepare toddlers for preschool?
- How should I address parent concerns about preparing children for preschool?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Acknowledge that a child's emotional and social development, beginning from infancy, is the base upon which future learning occurs.
- ★ Consider that self-help skills such as dressing, toileting and feeding are foundational skills for preschool age children.
- ★ Acknowledge that toddlers' ability to develop self-competence readies them for new challenges.
- ★ Recognize that learning to relate to others is a developing skill that supports peer play and interactions and is important for preschool.
- ▲ Respectfully acknowledge family concerns; they want the best for their child.
- ★ Share with the family the teaching philosophy that supporting a child's current development and emerging skills is the best way to prepare her for the next developmental stage.
- ▲ Partner with families to identify their children's emerging interests and skills.
- ▲ Share photographs of their children playing and write a caption to explain how this experience supports children's development and learning.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I incorporate learning opportunities into my day?
- How do I communicate the child's daily experiences to his family?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that toddlers learn through routines and transitions by completing a series of steps and problem solving.
- ▲ Talk to the child during routines/transitions. Describe what is happening, ask simple questions, and comment on what they say to build vocabulary.
- ▲ Respond to children's interests. For example, when a child discovers a spider, informally talk about where spiders live, its color/size. Add books, pictures, and songs to the environment related to the children's interests.
- ◆ Allow activities to unfold. Provide uninterrupted time when children are engaged in meaningful play. Routines and child-initiated play/learning are equally important.
- ★ Recognize that structured group time is not an appropriate method to engage toddlers in learning.
- ◆ Write notes to parents that include meaningful experiences the child had during routine/play. Explain how these experiences support child development.
- ▲ Create a photographic display of children engaged in routine/play identifying their emerging skills.
- ▲ Include an article about preschool readiness in the family newsletter; highlight particular skills that are being supported in your classroom.

Put It All Together

Toddler 93



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Ms. Alana and Ms. Sally work in a toddler class with eight toddlers ages 20 months to 36 months. Much of their time is spent on caregiving routines such as meals/snacks, washing hands, toileting, dressing and transitioning between play/learning and routines. Though these tasks take up a significant part of their day, they understand that these skills help toddlers actively participate more and more in self-care and gain self-competence. They are also emerging foundational skills for preschool age children.

Upon arrival, Mr. Ichiro settles his daughter, Micah, 24 months, into play then asks Ms. Sally, "We want Micah to be ready for preschool, so when will you start to teach her colors, letters, and counting?" Ms. Sally replies, "Good question. Micah is right on track, learning what she needs to as a toddler that will prepare her for preschool. For instance, Micah is learning early reading and writing skills. She always has books to look at and talk about; we read to her and she "reads" to us. She also loves to draw. Last week she "drew" her dog Buddy and told me he chases birds. She also enjoys lacing the big beads. We count and talk about the colors and sizes of the beads. Would you like to pick up a copy of the posted lesson plan tonight when you pick up Micah?" Mr. Ichiro replies he would and appreciates the information. Knowing she needs to keep this conversation brief so she can continue caring for the children, she writes herself a quick note to ask Mr. Ichiro what Micah's interests are at home, so she can include this information in her planning.

Recognizing that structured group time is not an appropriate method of learning for toddlers, Ms. Sally and Ms. Alana provide a variety of opportunities and experiences with ample time for exploration and interaction. The teachers observed several toddlers are excited about recent and upcoming birthdays and often say, "I'm two!" or, "I'm three!" So this morning Ms. Sally sets out play dough, craft sticks and other play dough accessories, along with birthday materials such as hats, decorative paper plates, and a pretend cake. Silas, 35 months, pretends the play dough is a cake and the craft sticks are candles, and "blows them out." Ms. Sally sings, "Happy Birthday to You," and others join in. She asks Silas, "How old will you be?" and they count the "candles." Some toddlers want the song sung to them, so Ms. Sally and some of the toddlers sing the song to their friends. Ms. Sally takes pictures for the parent board.

While Ms. Sally and some of the toddlers are "celebrating" birthdays, Ms. Alana helps Jeremiah, 33 months, toilet. During toileting transition, Ms. Alana says to Jeremiah, "In 3 minutes I am going to ask you to try to go the bathroom," as she counts to three on each finger. In 3 minutes she says to Jeremiah, "It is time to go to the bathroom. Do you want to jump there?" Jeremiah shouts, "Yes!" and begins jumping. Ms. Alana and Jeremiah count each jump. Ms. Alana knows toileting involves toddlers following directions, completing a series of steps, and solving problems. So she gives Jeremiah plenty of time to undress, talking him through the steps and encouraging him to participate in his care as much as possible.

At the end of the day, Ms. Sally has a copy of the lesson plan for Mr. Ichiro and a brief, detailed note about Micah's experiences. She asks Mr. Ichiro about Micah's interests at home. For tomorrow, she photocopies an article about toddler development and preschool readiness to send home with the parents.



### Social Development:

The child will engage in give-and-take exchanges with an adult.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will remember people, objects and events.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize his or her ability to do things.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Getting Ready for Preschool...Can't Play Anymore*

### **Watch**



The older toddlers in Mr. Steve and Ms. Judy's room will be transitioning into the preschool room in a few months. The teachers decide to change their curriculum from play-based learning and activities to a more structured learning environment for preschool readiness activities.

First, they include literacy activities to help children learn to read and write the first letter of their name. Eight children gather at the table, each receiving a crayon and lined paper with the child's name written on the first row. Ms. Judy asks them not to draw on the page, they are going to write instead, but as soon as Francesca, 29 months, and Josh, 30 months, get their crayons, they start drawing. Mr. Steve and Ms. Judy move quickly around the table guiding the toddlers' hands in tracing the first letter of their name so all of the children get practice at writing. The teachers remind them to write between the lines. By now, most of the children are scribbling marks on their paper. Jillian, 32 months, is making marks that resemble circles. When the marks resemble a letter, the teachers comment and encourage the child to keep writing.

By now, after just 5 minutes into the literacy activity, the toddlers have lost interest. Ms. Judy and Mr. Steve try to re-engage them by showing them how to draw simple shapes, a pre-math skill. Simon, 28 months, says, "All done," as he drops his crayon and leaves the activity. Other children soon leave the activity too.

“ I learn a lot of important information while playing. It prepares me to be a preschooler. ”



# Watch



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## more about...play



*Did you know that the development of play crosses over all of a child's developmental domains which include physical health, motor (muscles), emotional, social, cognitive (thinking) and language development? Did you know that there are many types of play behavior and that the benefits of play are well researched and documented? Research shows play is how infants, mobile infants and toddlers learn. Play prepares toddlers for preschool. Your role as a care teacher is an essential element in providing and supporting play experiences through responsive interactions and creating an interesting and appropriately challenging environment. Studying the types and benefits of play can greatly enhance a teacher's knowledge and applying that knowledge can positively influence the early experiences of toddlers that will last a lifetime.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How does play-based learning support preschool readiness?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that structured group time is not a developmentally appropriate method to engage toddlers in learning. Toddlers learn best through play and routines in an interesting and appropriately challenging environment.
- ★ Consider that during play toddlers develop cognitive (thinking) skills, including early literacy, social skills, communication skills, and problem solving – all preschool readiness skills.
- ★ Allow play experiences to unfold naturally providing uninterrupted time for meaningful play.
- ★ Recognize that learning is most beneficial when toddlers are free to make choices and explore their interests.
- ▲ Talk with children during play to expand vocabulary and support social rules of conversation. Talk in teacher led activities tends to be more “direction giving” which lacks richness.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I support early literacy in play?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that early writing for toddlers involves using small muscle skills and learning to manipulate writing tools (paper, markers, crayons, pencils, and paintbrushes).
- ★ Provide access to a variety of appropriate books. Have engaging interactions while looking at, talking about, and reading books.
- ▮ Create areas for children to practice scribbling and making marks.
- ▮ Provide access to early literacy materials throughout the day for toddlers to use when they are interested.
- ▲ Celebrate the process instead of the end-writing product. This helps build self-esteem and will encourage them to keep on writing.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- How can I support pre-math skills with toddlers?
- Why won't the children pay attention during group time?

### Give It a Try

- ▮ Provide materials that vary in difficulty for differing abilities and emerging skills. Include shape sorters, number books and puzzles, and opportunities for sorting, grouping, and categorizing.
- ▲ Interact with toddlers during play and routines. For example, talk about the shapes of objects; a plate is a circle, a block is square.
- ★ Recognize that young children gradually develop the ability to stay focused on an activity; it is a skill that does not need to be taught.

Put It All Together

Toddler 97



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

The older toddlers in Mr. Steve and Ms. Judy's room will be transitioning into the preschool room in a few months. The teachers have been integrating a variety of meaningful literacy and pre-math activities into their classroom.

The teachers use the environment to create several opportunities for name recognition. Mr. Steve creates labels that have the child's name and photograph. The photographs help children make the connection between themselves and their name in print. The labels are placed on the children's cubbies, cots, and on the family photo board, which is placed down low for the children to see.

Mr. Steve and Ms. Judy rearrange their room to allow for individuals or small groups of toddlers to play in the art, dramatic play, and manipulative area. Each table has space for three to four children to sit or stand. They set up an easel that has room for two children to create at one time. Cushions and a mat have been added to the book area so children can relax while they explore books. Used books were purchased at the local thrift store and from the community library sale. Writing materials, art materials, and manipulatives, like shape sorters, puzzles, and counting pegboards are rotated into play based on the child's interest and skill level of the children in the class.

Ms. Judy observes Simon, 28 months, and Francesca, 29 months, painting on the easel for 15 minutes, and other toddlers anxious to paint. So the next day, Ms. Judy hangs a sheet of butcher block drawing paper on the wall so more toddlers can paint. She also lays paper on the floor to catch any paint spills and drips.

In addition to painting, the teachers notice that toddlers flock to the table when they get out the crayons and paper. They decide to make one of the tables a writing center. They start out with paper and crayons and continue to add different materials throughout the next few weeks.

Josh, 30 months, and Jillian, 32 months, are drawing marks on their paper that resemble circles. Mr. Steve sits with them and says, "Wow, those are five big circles. How did you make them?" Josh smiles and says, "Like this. Zoom, zoom, zoom." Mr. Steve says, "Zoom, zoom, zoom around your crayon goes!" Soon Jillian joins in and the children have created new pictures. Mr. Steve says, "These are perfect for our wall. Can we hang one?" Jillian says, "No! I want mine." Mr. Steve smiles and says, "That's fine. You can take it home. Josh, do you want to hang yours up or take it home?" Josh decides to hang his picture. Mr. Steve and Josh decide the best place to hang it and hang his photo and name card near his art.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize herself or himself as a person with an identity, wants, needs, interests, likes and dislikes.



### Cognitive Development:

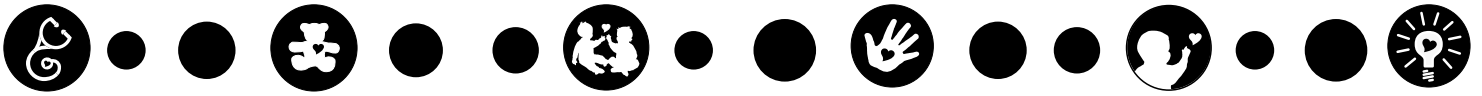
The child will be able to remain focused on a task or object and to persist in the face of obstacles.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will demonstrate interest in writing and will develop fine motor abilities required to hold a writing tool and make marks on a surface.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *Getting Ready for Preschool...Families Expect Me to Teach*

### **Watch**



Families in Ms. Melanie and Mr. Jack's toddler classroom are asking when their children will start learning pre-academic skills for preschool. The teachers understand the families' concerns: they want the best care and education for their child. But Mr. Jack and Ms. Melanie know toddlers learn best when they have experiences to practice current skills and have opportunities to explore emerging skills. Experiences intended to support toddlers' learning should focus on their interests.

Knowing the children are learning while they are playing and their toddlers are right on track developmentally, Ms. Melanie and Mr. Jack decide not to change their care teaching strategies. So instead, they decide to let the parents know that their children are learning.

Mr. Jack makes a colorful banner that says, "We are learning while we play," and hangs it across the play space. Ms. Melanie takes pictures of Tameka, 30 months, scooping and pouring sand and water during play, and of Darnell, 29 months, making marks on paper in the art area. She will hang the photos on the parent board to show the children are engaged, happy and learning.

Realizing the lesson plan isn't posted near the parent entrance, they re-post it where parents sign their children in and out so the parents can see that the teachers are intentionally planning learning experiences. They hope these communication methods will ease the parents' concerns.

“ I need you to show my family the progress I am making toward school readiness. ”



# Watch



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*more about... communication with families*

Families are a child's first and most important teacher. They have entrusted the care and learning of their child to you, someone who will have a direct influence on their child's health, safety and well-being, including preparing their child for success, whether it is for school success or in making friends. It is the responsibility of care teachers to understand how infants and toddlers develop, how experiences connect with and support development, and then to communicate this information to the family. Different types of communication work best for different family needs. Provide written, photo, and verbal documentation on a regular basis. Brief but meaningful communication tends to help busy families on the go.

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How should I address parent concerns about preparing children for preschool?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Respectfully acknowledge family concerns; they want the best for their child.
- ▲ Plan communication with families that builds a mutual understanding in ways that are sensitive to individual family needs and cultural and language differences.
- ★ Share with the family the teaching philosophy that supporting a child's current development and emerging skills is the best way to prepare her for the next developmental stage.
- ▲ Listen carefully to what families say about their children and seek to understand their goals, priorities and preferences. Consider families' input as you plan curriculum.
- ▲ Include an article about preschool readiness in the family newsletter; highlight particular skills that are being supported in your classroom.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How do I communicate to the family that their child's daily experiences are preparing them for preschool?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Share a quick story with Tameka's dad when he picks her up about Tameka's experience with dumping/ filling and how she made a "river" in the sand. Relate the experience to learning science skills.
- ▲ Give families an individual photo of their child engaged in playing/learning. On the back of the photo include a quote the child said during the experience. Briefly describe how this experience supports preschool readiness.
- ▮ Make the learning process visual. Create a "Today we..." message board and a photo/caption display.
- ▲ Write brief notes to parents several times a week that include meaningful experiences the child had during routine/play. Explain how these experiences support child development.
- ★ Provide each family with a copy of a developmental stages, milestones and behaviors resource document such as *South Carolina's Infant & Toddler Guidelines*.
- ▲ Conduct family/teacher conferences twice a year to review goals and development. Share the child's portfolio with the family.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- What should the curriculum plan include to help parents understand how it benefits their children?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Highlight the child's interests, current/emerging skills and experiences that support developmental skills.
- ★ Align skills to specific infant/toddler developmental domains and behaviors.
- ★ Write a brief narrative on the curriculum plan highlighting a developmental skill and how it aligns to preschool readiness.
- ▲ Provide families with a copy of the curriculum plans.

Put It All Together

Toddler 101



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Families in Ms. Melanie and Mr. Jack's toddler classroom are asking when their children will start learning pre-academic skills for preschool. The teachers understand the families' concerns; the families want the best care and education for their children.

Mr. Jack and Ms. Melanie realize they need to be more intentional about sharing their teaching philosophy with the families and have decided to add that to their family newsletter. The teachers update their daily (or weekly) curriculum plan to show alignment to the *Infant & Toddler Guidelines* and provide a copy to each parent as well as post it in the arrival/departure area of the room.

To visually connect play to learning, Ms. Melanie and Mr. Jack add some new methods for briefly communicating to families about ways children learn.

The teachers hang a dry erase board by the entrance to their room that reads "Today we..." to highlight an experience that occurred that day. At pick-up time, they encourage the families to check it out. Today Ms. Melanie wrote, "Today we read *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*" and the toddlers finished the sentence 'I see a red bird looking at me.' They are building an early interest in reading, which will help motivate them to learn to read when they are older!! Check out the book at the local library!"

For individual parent communication, Mr. Jack snapped a photo of Tameka, 30 months, playing at the water and sand table. He jotted down her comment on a sticky note to add to her photo, "The water goes down the sand. I stop it," she said as she put the shovel in front of the moving water. He also writes that she explored science skills of cause and effect while creating a "river" of water in the sand. Mr. Jack will give this to her family tomorrow. Using such documentation to communicate offers a possible keepsake for her family.

Darnell, 29 months, is an avid "writer" and loves making marks on paper and telling a story. Ms. Melanie, not wanting to intrude on Darnell's picture and story, later writes on the back of his paper what he told her his story was about. Ms. Melanie also included wording from *South Carolina's Infant & Toddler Guidelines* that an interest in writing develops small muscle skills which are needed to hold a pencil and is a component of early literacy.

Families have responded well to the white board communication as well as to the individual stories the teachers have been sharing. Ms. Melanie and Mr. Jack feel like they are becoming more effective at addressing families' interest in getting their children prepared for preschool while maintaining an age appropriate classroom.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will be able to mirror, repeat and practice the actions modeled by another.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will use the self, objects or others to attain a goal.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will demonstrate interest in book reading, story telling and singing and will eventually understand the meaning of basic symbols.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *I Know I Should...Keep Toys, Activity Areas Open All Day*

### **Watch**



Mr. Elijah is a care teacher for a group of toddlers. For the majority of the day, the toddlers have access to all of the learning areas and materials in their room. Mr. Elijah finds the end of the day hectic with families arriving to pick up their children. Toys are strewn about and he still needs to attend to the closing duties of cleaning and sanitizing. So toward the end of the day, Mr. Elijah closes off learning areas and puts away some materials to help maintain order.

Ollie, 26 months, is building a block structure using many different blocks and it has taken him quite a bit of time. Hank, 20 months, is stringing beads. This is the first time he has been able to string so many beads consecutively. Sierra, 24 months, is laying out scarves on the floor so each scarf lines up to the next with corners touching. Mr. Elijah has cleared a space to accommodate her work.

When it is about time to go outside, Mr. Elijah tells each child to clean up their toys. Hank yells, "Mine!" when Mr. Elijah attempts to pick up the lacing beads. While lifting the string and sliding the beads off Mr. Elijah says, "You have to put them away now. Watch them slide off of the string." Hank repeats, "My beads," and shoves the bead bin. Although Hank is upset, Mr. Elijah ignores his outburst and re-shelves the beads. Ollie asks Mr. Elijah if he can leave his blocks out. Mr. Elijah nicely replies, "No, put the blocks back. You can build it again later." Ollie hangs his head and disappointedly disassembles his structure. Sierra stamps her feet and frantically tries to put the scarves back in order when Mr. Elijah starts putting them away.

When the toddler group returns indoors, Mr. Elijah closes off the block and vehicle area, the dramatic play and music area, and one of the manipulatives areas. Ollie runs eagerly to the block area and stops quickly at the closed off area asking, "Can I build?" Mr. Elijah replies, "Not now, it is closed. Your grandpa will be coming soon. You can build tomorrow." Ollie hangs his head and walks away. Sierra, looking for the scarves, asks, "Where are my scarves?" Mr. Elijah gives her a reply similar to the one given to Ollie. Hank runs around the room, not finding anything interesting to do. Ollie looks absently out the window and Sierra lays books on the floor in a manner similar to what she did with the scarves.

“ I actively continue to learn when given the opportunity to explore my ideas. ”



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*more about... opportunities  
for learning*

*Ongoing access to materials, equipment, and experiences that interest children significantly contributes to their ability to engage in complex play. Children follow their drive to explore materials and discover what they can make happen. They also combine materials to make new discoveries and extend their learning. If materials are often not accessible to children for long periods of time, the children's opportunities for learning are greatly diminished.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

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## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How can I maintain some order at the end of the day?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Prepare children's belongings and paperwork that is to be sent home ahead of time.
- ▲ Allow children to play until it's time to begin the transition routine to go home. This keeps children engaged in learning and reduces inappropriate behavior, conflict, and boredom.
- ◆ Begin transition routines several minutes before the child's family is scheduled to arrive. Some children will take longer to do the routine, so individualize the time needed. Keep the routine the same every day.
- ◆ Include clean-up as part of the transition routine. Have appropriate expectations for the children's abilities to participate. Help children with the clean-up process.
- ◆ Communicate with families. Ask them to notify you if they will not be picking up their child at the typical time, so the child will be ready. Preparing ahead of time will make for a smoother transition for everyone.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- What are Ollie, Hank, and Sierra learning from their play experiences?
- Why do some children have such a strong reaction when their play is interrupted?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Recognize that children learn holistically. Ollie is learning about balance, coordination, space, and patience, as well as how to use his small muscle skills to set up the blocks and his large muscle skills to move around his structure.
- ★ Appreciate the trial and error process Hank has used to string several beads and the problem solving skills he has engaged in.
- ★ Acknowledge Sierra's concentration and persistence in laying out her scarves in a way that interests her.
- ★ Consider that play is important and enjoyable for children. When play is interrupted, their learning is interrupted.
- ★ Keep in mind that children's temperaments play a role in their actions and reactions.
- ★ Note that Ollie's feelings about having to end his block play are just as important as Hank's and Sierra's even though Ollie has a quieter reaction.
- ★ Recognize that children communicate through their behaviors. Care teachers need to read those behavioral cues and respond accordingly.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- Why don't the children engage in other activities with the same interest and enthusiasm as earlier?
- How does having access to materials throughout the day benefit children?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Consider that children tend to engage in play longer when they choose the materials and experiences that interest them.
- ▲ Offer materials throughout the day so children can freely explore and fulfill their curiosity and so you can support peak learning moments.

Put It All Together

Toddler 105



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

The toddlers in Mr. Elijah's toddler room are busy at play. Ollie, 26 months, is building a block structure using many different blocks and it has taken him quite a bit of time. Hank, 20 months, is stringing beads. This is the first time he has been able to string so many beads consecutively. Sierra, 24 months, is laying out scarves on the floor so each scarf lines up to the next with corners touching. Mr. Elijah has cleared a space to accommodate her work.

Mr. Elijah knows the toddlers in his care well – their temperaments, likes, and dislikes. He knows which children may or may not be able to resume play once interrupted. Knowing it is beneficial for children to continue their play, he gives them as much time as possible and prepares them for transitions. When it is about time to go outside, he checks in with each child. He says to Ollie, "That is a very long building. Do you want to build some more when you come back in from outside?" Ollie replies, "Yes, I make it bigger." Mr. Elijah also lets Hank and Sierra know about the upcoming outdoor time. When it is time to go out Hank says, "No go out," and holds tightly to his lacing beads. Mr. Elijah kindly replies, "Lay it on the table and it'll be here when you come back."

When they come back indoors, Ollie and Sierra go directly back to the blocks and scarves and continue their play. Mr. Elijah observes Hank looking around for something to do and says, "Hank, your beads are on the table," as he points to the table. Hank replies, "I all done." Mr. Elijah kindly remarks, "The beads need to go back in the bin, come help me." Mr. Elijah starts to put the beads in the bin then Hank says, "I do it." Hank slides the beads off one at a time and hands each one to Mr. Elijah who drops it into the bin. Mr. Elijah knows that Hank may not always help clean up, but he is learning to participate in the clean-up process. Mr. Elijah knows he must be patient with the toddlers and set appropriate expectations.

He realizes that Sierra's aunt will be arriving soon. He tells Sierra that she will need to pick up the scarves because this area needs to be cleaned. He reassures her that she can play with the scarves tomorrow. Mr. Elijah knows that Sierra likes to put the scarves away in a certain manner, so he is sure to give her plenty of notice. Her belongings are ready, and her paperwork is on the family sign-in table.

Soon after Sierra's aunt arrives, Ollie's grandpa shows up earlier than usual. Mr. Elijah greets Ollie's grandpa and asks Ollie if he'd like to show his grandpa his building. Ollie eagerly takes his grandpa's hand, shows him his building, and tells him about it. Ollie is very proud of his structure. Mr. Elijah knows that taking apart the structure and putting away the pieces will upset Ollie and delay Ollie's grandpa. Knowing Ollie and seeing his enthusiasm Mr. Elijah asks, "Do you want to leave this up and work on it tomorrow?" Ollie happily says, "I build it bigger tomorrow." Mr. Elijah understands the benefit of enhancing Ollie's learning by allowing him to expand on his ideas.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will be able to remain focused on a task or object and to persist in the face of obstacles.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize his or her ability to do things.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will convey a message or transfer information to another person.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *I Know I Should...Go Outside More Often*

### **Watch**



It is difficult for care teacher Ms. Irene to get her toddlers ready to go outside when the weather is chilly. There are so many steps to making sure that all of the children are dressed appropriately and that they don't get upset while waiting for other children to get ready.

Coming back inside is just about as hard. Jackets lay on the floor, mismatched gloves are strewn around the room, and hats are often misplaced or lost. Several of Ms. Irene's families have complained about lost items only to have them show up in their cubbies after the families have replaced the items. As a result, Ms. Irene doesn't take the children outside very often, even though they are scheduled to go outside twice a day.

Today is sunny but cold. Chio, 20 months, is looking out the window saying, "Go outside, go outside," while patting the window. Twenty-three-month-old Josiah, hearing Chio, pulls his coat off the hook and attempts to put it on. Ms. Irene would rather stay in and put on some music to dance to. It saves time and is less hectic. She also doesn't like to be out in the cold weather. She says to the toddlers, "No, we aren't going outside. We are going to stay in and dance." Josiah, still trying to get his coat on, asks, "I go out?" Ms. Irene repeats, "No Josiah, we are going to stay inside and dance. Here, I'll hang your coat back up." Josiah responds, "No, go out." "Not today, it is too cold," replies Ms. Irene. She puts on some music and encourages the toddlers to dance.

The toddlers aren't interested in dancing. A couple of them roam the room looking for something to do. Chio continues to look out the window and Josiah stacks blocks and knocks them over. But it isn't long before Ms. Irene notices some toddlers climbing on the shelves and running around.

“ When I play outside, I have opportunities to learn new things I can't experience inside. ”



## Watch



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## more about... outdoor play

*Frequent opportunities for outdoor play enable children to learn about themselves, what they can do, what they want to do, and what they feel, see, hear and smell. Outdoor time also provides them with the opportunity to experience cause and effect relationships in nature, for example, by seeing and hearing wind blowing the leaves off of a tree or the sun warming their face. Children's experiences with nature in the outside environment give teachers many opportunities to build language skills and begins to lay the foundation for science concepts by helping children to group and categorize elements around them. It is important to remember that taking children on buggy rides should not be used to replace outside playtime and restricting children's movements outdoors by placing them in seats or other infant equipment does not provide the learning opportunities and experiences they need for healthy development.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How can I make the transitions of going outside and coming inside easier?

### Give It a Try

- ▮ Organize a space for each child's coat with a container for the child's hat, gloves and other outside apparel.
- ▲ Support toddlers in putting on and taking off their outdoor clothing. This builds an important self-help skill.
- ▲ Assist toddlers with learning to put away their coats, hat and gloves after coming inside.
- ◆ Create an "exit and enter" routine for going outside and coming inside. Use the same routine each time. Routines give children a sense of security in knowing what will happen next and may prevent problems that can arise during transitions.
- ◆ Use a song or rhyme to signal children that a routine is about to occur. With toddlers, use the same song until everyone understands what it means.
- ◆ Reduce wait time. Put your coat on first and have materials ready to go outside before dressing children.
- ◆ Divide children into small groups, taking each group out at separate times.
- ◆ Arrange for an extra care teacher to assist in transitions.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How does weather play a role in deciding about going outside?
- What are the benefits of outdoor play?

### Give It a Try

- ▮ Consider it is best practice to take children outside unless there is active rain or snow or a public health advisory.
- ◆ Make sure to give children enough time outside for large motor play.
- ◆ Adjust how long to stay outside depending on weather conditions.
- ◆ Dress children and yourself appropriately for the weather.
- ★ Recognize that outdoor play provides an environment for children to explore and make discoveries that are different from those provided by an indoor environment.
- ▲ Join in play with the children during their time outside to extend and encourage their learning and exploration.
- ★ Be aware that exposure to outdoor environments supports children's physical health. Fresh air and sunlight are important to a child's overall health, even when a child is ill. Of course, always follow the doctor's advice.
- ▮ Provide material and equipment to support large muscle development.

Put It All Together

Toddler 109



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Today is sunny but cold. Care teacher Ms. Irene is aware that it is about time to take the children outside for play. Chio, 20 months, is already looking out the window saying, "Go outside, go outside," while patting the window. Twenty-three-month-old Josiah, hearing Chio, pulls his coat off the coat hook and attempts to put it on. Ms. Irene has noticed that some of her toddlers are initiating self-help skills, whether it is bringing their coat to her for help or attempting to put it on themselves.

Ms. Irene says, "Yes, Chio we are going outside. Let's get your coat." Chio finds his coat but has difficulty getting it off of the coat hook. Ms. Irene helps him get it down making a mental note that his hook may need lowered so he is able to do this by himself. She assists Josiah with getting his coat, hat and gloves on. She hands him a ball and asks, "Will you please hold this for me? We are going to take it outside." Josiah says, "I take ball," and walks to look out the window.

In the meantime, Ms. Irene readies the other toddlers. She lets them walk about and play until all the toddlers are ready to go outside. She has found this routine reduces children becoming upset. Just as important, play and learning are extended and not wasted on waiting.

Once outside, Josiah runs to the fence to watch the construction vehicles across the street. The equipment has been there all week, and many of the toddlers are fascinated watching what the vehicles do and hearing the different sounds they make. Ms. Irene says, "What are the trucks doing today?" Josiah replies, "Bulldozer is gone." She responds, "You're right, I don't see it." Josiah asks, "Where did it go?" "It went back to the garage. It was done moving dirt," she answers. Josiah looks at Ms. Irene and takes a moment to think about what she said. Looking back at the construction site he says, "Dump truck has dirt." "It has a big load of dirt. It is spilling out," says Ms. Irene. She realizes she should add books about construction vehicles to the book area and see if there are extra toy vehicles that could be rotated into play to extend the children's learning.

Chio, in the meantime, has been throwing a ball, running after it, and then throwing it again. He is having some trouble picking up the ball with his gloves on. But he has figured out to trap the ball against his chest with his arms and hands as he bends over to pick it up.

Ms. Irene calls to the toddlers that it is time to go in. Once inside, some of the older toddlers know to go to their cubby and put their hat and gloves in their box and some have learned to unzip their coats. Ms. Irene helps the children that need assistance and allows those who want to do it themselves plenty of time to do as much as they are able. She remains available to help them whenever needed.



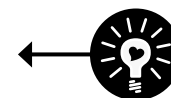
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The child will use the self, objects or others to attain a goal.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *I Know I Should...Offer Creative Arts*

### **Watch**



Ms. Bobbie and Mr. Tim are care teachers for a group of toddlers. They know they should offer art more often, but it is hectic and messy and the teachers feel like it ends up being a negative experience because the toddlers don't listen.

The teachers wait for all of the toddlers to come to the table for an art activity. Some children are reluctant and want to continue playing on their own. When all of the toddlers are finally at the art table, Ms. Bobbie places the art materials on the table. Several toddlers eagerly reach for the supplies. "Wait! I will pass them out after I tell you what we are making," Ms. Bobbie exclaims. "We are going to make pumpkins like this," explains Ms. Bobbie as she shows them the orange construction paper pumpkin with a green construction paper stem.

Mr. Tim gives everyone a brown crayon and a paper pumpkin that he cut out earlier. "You can color your pumpkins brown." Sydney, 32 months, says, "I want pink," which is her favorite color. Mr. Tim replies, "We are using fall colors today. Pink isn't a fall color." "I want pink please," she repeats. "You can use pink next time. Your mommy will like your brown and orange pumpkin," answers Mr. Tim. Sydney sits for a moment, looking disappointed, then begins to use the crayon without much effort.

After a few minutes Ms. Bobbie says, "OK, put your crayon in the basket," even though some children are still making marks. She encourages them to hurry as the other children are restless. "Now we are going to put the stems on. Mr. Tim and I will put on the glue and help you paste on the stems." Each child is to wait their turn. The teachers try to hurry, but the toddlers want to touch and smear the glue, which makes a mess. Bennett and Alan, both 29 months, start waving their unfinished pumpkins around and then smacking them into each other and giggling wildly. Two other toddlers join in on the fun. Ms. Bobbie exclaims, "Stop! Put those down please." The teachers decide to put the pumpkin stems on for the toddlers to speed up the process.

Ms. Bobbie starts to draw black lines on each child's pumpkin to resemble the ridges on a real pumpkin. When Ms. Bobbie begins to draw on Sydney's pumpkin, Sydney cries, "No, my pumpkin." Ms. Bobbie replies, "It will look more like a pumpkin with the lines." Sydney angrily swipes her pumpkin onto the floor and cries.

“ I learn more from art when I make my own choices. ”



## Watch



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The teachers wait for all of the toddlers to come to the table for an art activity. Some children are reluctant and want to continue playing on their own. When all of the toddlers are finally at the art table, Ms. Bobbie places the art materials on the table. Several toddlers eagerly reach for the supplies. "Wait! I will pass them out after I tell you what we are making," Ms. Bobbie exclaims. "We are going to make pumpkins like this," explains Ms. Bobbie as she shows them the orange construction paper pumpkin with a green construction paper stem.

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## more about... creative arts

*Creative arts for young children are about exploring and manipulating art materials, rather than about creating pieces of art. Allowing children to make discoveries with appropriate art materials provides them with more opportunities to learn from the experience than when the art activity is predesigned and scripted. Just as we offer them opportunities to play with puzzles, books and blocks throughout the day, children can benefit from repeated opportunities to engage in art experiences. Consider that the use of art materials requires sufficient eye-hand coordination and self-control. Very young children who are only beginning to develop self-control may put materials into their mouths. Art may not be appropriate for them. Frequent observation of children using materials helps to determine their abilities and the types of art materials they can safely handle. Examples of appropriate art materials include non-toxic crayons, non-toxic finger paint, large non-toxic chalk, chalkboard, and a variety of paper. For older toddlers, try offering water color markers, a variety of painting tools, easy to use blunt scissors, and play dough with simple tools.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- What are appropriate guidelines for toddler art experiences?

### Give It a Try

- ▮ Keep in mind potential safety hazards when choosing art materials. Safety always takes priority. Follow safety warnings, age recommendations and directions on art materials.
- ★ Determine if art experiences are of interest to each child and appropriate for the child's age and abilities.
- ★ Recognize that art is about the process, what children learn, and how it supports their development. It is not about the finished product.
- ★ Consider that art is not meant to represent themes such as the seasons or holidays. Art is an opportunity for a child to be free to create.
- ▲ Remember that art is not the use of coloring sheets, pre-printed pictures or papers that are cut out to resemble an item that the children are to draw/paint on.
- ▲ Offer daily art experiences and let children come and go as they desire. Do not require children to participate.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- What are appropriate expectations concerning a toddler's art ability?
- What strategies help toddlers benefit from art experiences?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Remember that toddlers manipulate objects in different ways in order to learn about them. This includes art materials.
- ★ Keep in mind that there should be little, if any, wait time. Toddlers will develop the ability to wait throughout the preschool years.
- ★ Recognize that toddlers have not fully developed the ability to manage their behavior and impulse control. These skills develop with age and teacher guidance.
- ▲ Offer art to three to four children at a time, so you can give individualized attention to each child and manage the situation more easily.
- ▮ Provide a variety of age appropriate materials. Allow toddlers to choose crayons, paints, types of paper or other drawing surfaces. Having opportunities to make choices expands their learning and allows for creativity.
- ▮ Ready the environment. Have materials set out and ready for use when toddlers arrive at the table.
- ▮ Adapt materials to support each child's ability. For example, tape paper to the table if a child is having difficulty holding it.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- Why does Sydney become upset?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Respect a child's art. Children are proud of what they produce. Do not cut or manipulate to create something else. The child's art is the finished product.

Put It All Together

Toddler 113



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Ms. Bobbie and Mr. Tim are care teachers for a group of toddlers. They have art materials accessible daily for the toddlers to use whenever they want. The teachers choose materials that are safe, appropriate, and that require less supervision. On a shelf beside the child-size table and chairs is a container of crayons, which are in good condition. The teachers have limited how many crayons they put out. There are enough for several children to choose from a variety of colors, but not too many. This means they always have crayons in good condition to rotate into use. There is a wide selection of different types, sizes and colors of paper for children to choose too.

The teachers also offer other daily art opportunities. Today, the toddlers can choose to paint. Ms. Bobbie tapes three large pieces of white paper to the table, one for each child. She decided to tape the paper because a few days ago when they painted some toddlers had difficulty managing the paper while painting. She places three containers of different paint colors at each child's place along with three different painting utensils.

Bennett, 29 months, notices Ms. Bobbie setting out the supplies and hurries to the table. Mr. Tim sees Alan, 29 months, wandering so he asks Alan if he would like to paint. Alan replies, "I like to paint," and joins Bennett. Sydney, 32 months, overhears Mr. Tim talking to Alan and asks, "Can I paint?" Mr. Tim replies, "Yes, Ms. Bobbie is at the table." Sydney rushes to the table.

The toddlers get their smocks on and immediately start to paint. Sydney looks at the paint colors and says, "I want pink," her favorite color. Ms. Bobbie replies, "Let me see if we have any." She does and pours it into a container. "We do have pink. May I trade you for one of your other colors so the table isn't so crowded?" Sydney looks into the containers and hands the brown paint to Ms. Bobbie who says, "Thank you," as she takes it. Sydney uses the large paint brush. Taking her time and concentrating, she covers the entire surface of her paper with pink. Sydney says, "I'm all done," while looking at Ms. Bobbie proudly. Ms. Bobbie returns Sydney's smile and says, "Are you going to give that to your mommy? Or should we hang it in our room?" Sydney thinks then replies, "Hang it there," as she points to an area where other art is displayed. Ms. Bobbie replies, "When it dries, you can hang it up."

Bennett is slowly dabbing a sponge into the paint then dabs, rolls, and wipes the paper with the sponge, looking at the different patterns. He holds up the sponge to Ms. Bobbie and says, "What's this?" She replies, "That is a sponge." He repeats, "A sponge. I paint with sponge."

Alan quickly pushes his round paint brush deep into the paint and then uses it to make two blotches of blue. He starts to take off his smock and says, "I done." Ms. Bobbie smilingly replies, "You paint quickly. Mr. Tim will help you wash your hands."

Two other children who wanted to paint take the spots vacated by Sydney and Alan.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will participate in interactions with language that follow the expected practices of the child's family and community.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will make things happen and understand the causes of some events.



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the use of his or her hands, fingers and sight in order to manipulate objects in the environment.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *I Know I Should...Implement Primary Caregiving*

### **Watch**



Russ, 30 months, is fascinated playing with the magnetic maze. He is figuring out the best way to hold the magnetic stylus to move the butterfly magnet through the garden maze board. He is very persistent in his attempts to move the magnet. Mr. Perry and Ms. Rhea, toddler care teachers, notice Russ is busy and content so they attend to other children and tasks.

Russ occasionally looks at his teachers while working with the maze. The teachers don't see Russ's cues. He eventually moves the magnetic butterfly from one end of the maze to the other. He looks up and says excitedly, "I did it," and neither teacher hears him. He looks around and sees Mr. Perry looking out the window with Muriel. Russ goes to him and happily says, "I did it." Mr. Perry responds, "What did you do?" Russ replies, "I moved the butterfly." "You did? Well you did a good job. Why don't you go tell Ms. Rhea?" says Mr. Perry. Russ hurries to Ms. Rhea and says, "I moved the butterfly!" Ms. Rhea replies, "What butterfly?" Russ points to the magnetic maze on the table and says, "That one." Ms. Rhea responds, "Oh, the magnetic butterfly. That is great, Russ." Russ waits, looking at Ms. Rhea as she continues playing with another child. He solemnly returns to the magnet board and attempts to move the butterfly magnet again. Mr. Perry and Ms. Rhea continue caring for the other children.

Later that day, Mr. Perry updates the children's daily reports and includes the activities the toddlers did that day. On all of the children's reports he lists that they had the opportunity to use the water table and they played outside. He tries to remember something specific each child did to include on the report. On Russ's report he writes that Russ played with the magnetic maze. Mr. Perry also jots down a few similar notes to add to the children's portfolios, which will be used in program planning.

“ You can learn so much more about me when you're my primary care teacher. ”



## Watch



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*more about...primary care teachers*

*A primary care teacher is an early childhood professional with the education, training and experience to support the learning, development, and nurturance of children birth to 36 months of age. The primary care teacher has the principal responsibility for providing and coordinating the care (including safety, health, development, learning and emotional well-being) of specific or assigned infants and toddlers and for building a partnership with the children's families. Primary caregiving is not exclusive caregiving and works best when infant care teachers support each other as a team.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- How does primary caregiving increase opportunities to collect detailed information during child observations?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Consider that observing fewer children at play and learning is simpler than observing a larger number of children and may make more detailed observations possible.
- ★ Learn about how primary caregiving allows you to become familiar with a child's developmental abilities, emerging skills, likes/dislikes and temperament through close and frequent observation, which in turn helps you make decisions on individualized care teaching strategies.
- ◆ Understand that health and safety supervision is the responsibility of all teachers for all children throughout the day regardless of primary care groupings.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How does primary caregiving support and enhance children's development and learning?
- What are the teacher benefits to primary caregiving?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Focus on each child in your primary group to provide responsive, respectful, and reciprocal care. This type of care strengthens the child's relationship with you and the child's sense of emotional security.
- ★ Consider that building and maintaining a secure relationship with a consistent care teacher lays the foundation for a child's future learning.
- ▲ Validate Russ's accomplishment. Ask Russ to show you what he did and ask him to explain it if he wants. This builds his self-competence and develops his language skills.
- ★ Recognize that a secure attachment with a care teacher encourages a child to explore, to discover, and to learn, and supports the child's ongoing identity development.
- ▲ Touch base with Russ during play and read his cues. Avoid interrupting his play if he is fully engaged in what he is doing. Look frequently to see if he is sending you cues.
- ◆ Realize that primary care teachers enjoy a special connection with their primary care group.
- ▲ Consider that primary caregiving allows a teacher to concentrate on caring for, playing with and supporting the learning of a few children as opposed to many children.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- How can primary caregiving be useful in documentation?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Focus on each child in your small primary group, which for a child such as Russ allows you to document, in detail, examples of his problem solving skills, his use of small muscle skills, his attention and persistence, and his expression of pride in his accomplishment.
- ◆ Analyze the details of Russ's experience and note how you can support these skills through program planning.
- ★ Share with Russ's family what skills he displayed during his magnet play and how that play supports his development and learning.

Put It All Together

Toddler 117



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Russ, 30 months, is fascinated playing with the magnetic maze. He is figuring out the best way to hold the magnetic stylus to move the butterfly magnet through the garden maze board. He is very persistent in his attempts to move the magnet. Mr. Perry and Ms. Rhea are the toddler's care teachers. Mr. Perry is Russ's primary care teacher. Mr. Perry, sitting near the window with another child, notices that Russ is busy working on the magnetic maze. He keeps visually checking in with Russ.

Russ looks at Mr. Perry, but Mr. Perry doesn't notice Russ's glance. A couple of minutes later, Mr. Perry observes Russ and Russ looks up and catches Mr. Perry's eye. Russ smiles and resumes his work. Mr. Perry walks over to Russ and observes him manipulating the magnetic stylus. Russ grasps the stylus with his left hand with all of his fingers in a closed fist. Mr. Perry notices that Russ has learned a technique to move the butterfly magnet with longer strokes of the stylus, as opposed to short, jerky movements. Russ is using his right hand to hold the magnetic maze still so it doesn't move when he touches it with the stylus. Mr. Perry takes a picture of Russ to display in the room and put in Russ's portfolio. He'll also give a copy to Russ's family.

Russ says to Mr. Perry, "Watch me." Mr. Perry sits and watches Russ. Russ says, "I moved it!" Mr. Perry replies, "You moved the stylus to move the butterfly. You moved it from the orange flower to the black bird," he says as he points out the distance on the garden maze. Russ replies, "I move it to the red flower." Russ goes back to work concentrating on his task.

Seeing Russ focusing on using the maze, Mr. Perry attends to Muriel who is looking out the window. In a few minutes Russ hurries to Mr. Perry and happily says, "I did it." Mr. Perry responds, "What did you do?" Russ excitedly replies, "I moved the butterfly." Mr. Perry asks with a smile, "Would you like to show me?" Russ excitedly says, "Yes. I get it." He hurries, grabs the maze, and returns to Mr. Perry, who is sitting with Muriel still looking out the window. Mr. Perry says, "You moved the butterfly to the end of the garden! Do you want to show me how you make the butterfly move?" Russ squats down and moves the butterfly back through the maze.

Later that day, Mr. Perry updates the children's daily reports. He writes on Russ's report: Russ spent 15 minutes discovering how to manipulate the magnetic stylus to move the magnetic butterfly through the garden maze. He learned how to make long strokes with the stylus. Russ also used his right hand to hold the board steady so it wouldn't move. Russ excitedly said, "I did it! I moved the butterfly." Mr. Perry writes a quick note and adds it to Russ's portfolio and planning folder, where he'll later place the printed photograph he took of Russ. He'll use this documentation to plan other play and learning opportunities that will support fine muscle skill development.



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the use of his or her hands, fingers and sight in order to manipulate objects in the environment.



### Cognitive Development:

The child will use the self, objects or others to attain a goal.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize his or her ability to do things.



**Age Group:** Toddler

## *I Know I Should...Individualize Routines*

### **Watch**



When Rowan, 19 months, gets hungry and has to wait to eat, she cries loudly and is difficult to comfort. She follows her primary care teacher, Ms. Helen, around and hangs on her pant leg. Ms. Helen gets frustrated because she is trying to take care of other children and get lunch ready.

Usually Rowan is hungry before the other toddlers. Her home schedule is different than the program's meal schedule. Today, Ms. Helen decides to feed everyone a little earlier to prevent Rowan from getting so upset.

Ms. Helen starts washing the children's hands for lunch. Rowan hurries to her seat after washing her hands. However, Naomi, 26 months, doesn't want to eat lunch yet. When Ms. Helen calls her to come wash her hands and sit at the table, Naomi runs behind a shelf. Needing to get everyone seated, Ms. Helen picks her up even though she is resisting being carried and is crying. Ms. Helen talks to her calmly and gently washes her hands. She walks her to the table and helps her take a seat. Naomi remains upset.

Rowan begins eating immediately. Naomi pushes her plate away. Wyatt, 24 months, looks at his plate then at Ms. Helen and says, "Not hungry." Ms. Helen replies, "We are eating lunch a little early today, go ahead and eat." Wyatt rises to leave the table. Ms. Helen nicely says, "Wyatt, sit down please. It is lunchtime." He responds, "No, not hungry." Naomi cries, "I go play." A couple of the other toddlers are nibbling at their lunch, but not eating with the same hunger as they do at their regular lunchtime. Ms. Helen decides to let Wyatt and Naomi go play since they are not eating and causing disruption at the table.

It doesn't take Rowan long to finish eating and soon she shows signs of sleepiness and falls asleep at the table. Ms. Helen lets her sit there for a few minutes so the other toddlers can finish their lunch, and she can clean up. Ms. Helen wakes Rowan up and encourages her to go play. The teacher doesn't want Rowan to take a nap now because then she will be awake when the other children are napping.

“ No matter how old I am, I need my care individualized just for me. ”



# Watch



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## more about...toddlers' care schedules

*As children progress through toddlerhood, their schedules often become similar to the schedules of other toddlers in the group. Many are hungry and sleepy at the same time, though there may be some variations. Even so, the routine care needs of younger toddlers – and even of older toddlers – differ from the routine needs of others. It is important for a child's emotional development to meet his individual needs as they arise. This type of care establishes and builds trust between the child and you, and supports healthy attachment. Keep in mind that daily events at home, at the program, and illness and temperament may contribute to a child needing routine care met in a different way or at a different time than what you would typically expect.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- What should I do when a child's schedule is different from the schedule of most of the children in the group?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Practice responsive, respectful and reciprocal care teaching. Provide care to meet each child's individual needs.
- ◆ Allow children to follow their own individual schedules. A child should not be in distress waiting for her needs to be met.
- ◆ Avoid making other children adapt to Rowan's individual eating patterns.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How can I meet individual children's needs?
- How do individualized routines benefit toddlers?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Consider a child's individual needs, temperament, personal schedule, likes and dislikes and how you can provide responsive care to the child.
- ▲ Read children's cues and listen to what they are saying.
- ◆ Prepare for busy times of the day. Assess what care will soon be needed and plan accordingly.
- ◆ Feed children individually or in small groups of two or three based on their individual schedules.
- ▮ Offer a variety of appropriate materials and experiences to children whose behavior indicates they are not yet ready for routines such as snack, lunch or nap.
- ★ Acknowledge that routine care is a young child's curriculum. It has an impact on a child's learning, skill development and attachment to care teachers.
- ★ Use caregiving routines to get to know the toddlers as individuals. This approach to care provides children with a sense of security.
- ◆ Use individualized routines as a time to interact with children. This builds trust as well as language skills.

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- How can I meet the napping needs of individual children?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Understand that toddlers differ from one another in the amount of sleep they need.
- ◆ Anticipate that Rowan will get sleepy right after eating.
- ◆ Accommodate her personal schedule by helping her transition as soon as she shows signs of getting tired.
- ▮ Provide quiet play choices to toddlers who are not showing signs of sleepiness.

Put It All Together

Toddler 121



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Care teacher, Ms. Helen, notes it is almost time for Rowan, 19 months, to start showing signs of hunger. Most of the older toddlers are on the same feeding and napping schedule, but Rowan's routine care needs occur at a different time than theirs.

Ms. Helen has learned to offer Rowan snack and lunch at the first sign of hunger. Otherwise, Rowan gets so hungry that she begins to cry and is difficult to comfort, which then makes it hard for her to eat.

Ms. Helen washes Rowan's hands and invites her to sit down to eat. She sits beside her knowing children who are eating should always be closely supervised. Ms. Helen positions herself so she can see and interact with all of her toddlers. Ms. Helen asks, "Rowan, are your peaches good?" Rowan nods yes. "I like peaches too," says Ms. Helen.

Wyatt, 24 months, approaches the table and asks, "I have cracker?" But Ms. Helen knows the children well and their signs of hunger. Wyatt ate a hearty snack and Ms. Helen believes he may be asking because Rowan is eating. She says, "Wyatt, lunch is very soon. Do you want to use the crayons and draw?" Wyatt replies, "I get crayons," and hurries to the art shelf. When Wyatt returns, Ms. Helen says, "You need paper to draw on." Wyatt returns to the art shelf for paper. He sits beside Ms. Helen scribbling while Rowan eats.

Rowan gives a big yawn, has stopped eating, and begins to play with her food. "It looks like you are getting tired. Let me wash your face and hands, then you can take your nap." Once Rowan's face and hands are washed, she isn't sleepy enough to lie down in her crib. Ms. Helen says, "Rowan, you can rest in the cozy area with your blanket until you are ready to go to sleep." Rowan sits on the mat and picks up a book to look at.

Ms. Helen starts preparing lunch for the other toddlers. She tells Naomi, 26 months, "It is lunchtime. I'll be ready to wash your hands when I'm done with Wyatt's." Ms. Helen knows Naomi is typically not as eager to eat as everyone else, so she is usually the last one to get her hands washed.

While the toddlers are eating lunch, Rowan goes to Ms. Helen who is sitting at the table with the toddlers. Ms. Helen asks, "Do you want to sit on my lap while they eat?" Rowan climbs into Ms. Helen's lap and relaxes in her arms while listening to the conversations around the table. After lunch, Rowan is tired enough to lie in her crib for nap.



### Physical Health:

The child will be exposed to and assisted with frequent and proper handwashing.



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the use of his or her hands, fingers and sight in order to manipulate objects in the environment.



### Social Development:

The child will engage with other children.





**Age Group:** Toddler

## *I Know I Should...Serve Meals Family Style*

### **Watch**



Ms. Tara and Mr. Nolan are care teachers for eight toddlers, ages 24 months to 36 months. They and the program administrator have decided to start family style dining for lunch. Knowing it is best practice, the teachers are excited, but also cautious since it is something new for them.

At lunch today, Ms. Tara and Mr. Nolan's primary groups of toddlers complete their handwashing routines as Mr. Casey, the program's cook, brings the food cart to the classroom. Ms. Tara proceeds to set the tables with plates, plastic drinking glasses and utensils.

Meanwhile, Mr. Casey places serving bowls of food in the center of Ms. Tara's table. Ethan, 28 months, stands up and grabs a handful of green beans from the serving bowl. Mr. Casey politely says, "Not yet, Ethan. Sit down." Ethan sits back down dropping the green beans back into the serving bowl. Mr. Casey, sighing, removes the bowl of green beans commenting, "We'll need a new bowl of beans now."

Ms. Tara lets the children serve themselves peaches. She holds the bowl and guides their hands if help is needed. Serita, 25 months, decides to help herself to the noodles while waiting for the peaches. Taking a heaping spoonful, she plops it on her plate and beams with pride. Seeing Serita Ms. Tara says, "Serita, please wait for me. You took too much." Ms. Tara is getting frustrated that this is taking much longer than expected. Knowing the children are hungry, she decides to serve the food herself. Mr. Nolan, having a similar situation at his table, follows Ms. Tara's lead and also serves the children.

The teachers planned on sitting with the children while they ate, but they constantly have to serve food, pour milk, clean up spills and keep the children focused on eating. This experience of family style dining wasn't as pleasurable or successful as the teachers had hoped.

“Mealtime is more than feeding my hungry tummy. I like to relax, talk and learn.”



# Watch



Ms. Tara and Mr. Nolan are care teachers for eight toddlers, ages 24 months to 36 months. They and the program administrator have decided to start family style dining for lunch. Knowing it is best practice, the teachers are excited, but also cautious since it is something new for them.

At lunch today, Ms. Tara and Mr. Nolan's primary groups of toddlers complete their handwashing routines as Mr. Casey, the program's cook, brings the food cart to the classroom. Ms. Tara proceeds to set the tables with plates, plastic drinking glasses and utensils.

Meanwhile, Mr. Casey places serving bowls of food in the center of Ms. Tara's table. Ethan, 28 months, stands up and grabs a handful of green beans from the serving bowl. Mr. Casey politely says, "Not yet, Ethan. Sit down." Ethan sits back down dropping the green beans back into the serving bowl. Mr. Casey, sighing, removes the bowl of green beans commenting, "We'll need a new bowl of beans now."

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## more about...family dining

*Did you know in an average week you serve approximately 15 meals and snacks per child? That's about 780 meals and snacks per child per year. Implementing family style dining will make the most of those 780 encounters. This gives you 780 opportunities to provide nutritional food to help children grow and develop, to help them ward off illness, to model healthy eating to develop healthy habits, and to help children develop relationships and social and language skills to last a lifetime. Consider that people's points of view and memories of mealtime and food-related experiences start in infancy and last a lifetime. As a care teacher, you have a wonderful opportunity to start children on the right path to developing positive experiences and healthy habits that will continue to grow and develop beyond your care.*

### Give It a Try Key

▲ = Teacher Interaction

★ = Child Development & Interest

▮ = Environment & Materials

◆ = Caregiving Routine

## Take Another Look

### Ask Yourself

- What are the advantages of family style meals?
- How should I prepare to start family style dining?

### Give It a Try

- ◆ Recognize that it creates the atmosphere of a family seated together around a meal, having a conversation.
- ★ Consider that it develops self-help skills.
- ★ Appreciate that it lends itself to casual, richer conversation and develops strong communication skills.
- ★ Realize that it focuses on social skills and relationships, not only time for nourishment.
- ◆ Read a variety of resources on family style dining. Talk with infant and toddler consultants for ideas.
- ◆ Create a plan. Discuss expectations and implementation details with the administrator, cook and teachers a few weeks before starting a new routine.
- ◆ Slowly introduce children to the idea of family style dining. Include books in the cozy area showing families sitting together talking over meals. Talk to children at lunch time about how things will be done differently.

## Keep Watching

### Ask Yourself

- How does family style dining work?

### Give It a Try

- ▲ Provide a peaceful, comfortable atmosphere with pleasant conversation and plenty of patience.
- ◆ Sit with toddlers and set an example by eating the same food they are served.
- ◆ Observe if a child is overly hungry or has another immediate need. Serve him one food so he may start eating. Allow him to serve himself other foods later in the meal.
- ▲ Converse with children about what they are eating. Describe taste, temperature, shape, and color; don't make it a quiz. Talk about daily and home events.
- ▲ Encourage a child to try the food offered but honor her answer if she says "no."

## Watch Some More

### Ask Yourself

- How can family style dining be effective and pleasurable?

### Give It a Try

- ★ Keep realistic expectations considering the difficulty of each task (ex. serving with a spoon is easier than pouring a beverage). Only ask a child to do what he is developmentally ready to do.
- ◆ Expect spills. Have materials for quick clean up close by and ready to use.
- ◆ Make family style meals routine by serving meals the same way every time.
- ◆ Give children time to adjust to the new routine.
- ★ Approach dining as time to connect with toddlers emotionally and socially; you are helping them learn lifelong skills.

Put It All Together

Toddler 125



## Putting It All Together: Essential Practices in Action

Ms. Tara and Mr. Nolan are care teachers for eight toddlers, ages 24 months to 36 months. They and the program administrator have decided to start family style dining for lunch. Knowing it is best practice, the teachers are excited, but also cautious since it is something new for them.

Ms. Tara, Mr. Nolan, the program's cook Mr. Casey, and the program administrator met two weeks ago to plan to change meal and snack service to family style dining. They know it offers toddlers many benefits including encouraging independence, introducing them to new foods, and helping them learn to serve themselves and make choices. The staff are also aware that family style dining for lunch includes a lot of steps. They design a plan so they are ready.

The teachers agree that the children are ready for this transition. They have been eating snack family style at child-sized tables and chairs. They practiced pouring at the sensory table and played with a variety of dishes and utensils in the dramatic play area and outside in the sandbox. At lunch today, Ms. Tara's and Mr. Nolan's primary groups of toddlers complete their handwashing routines as Mr. Casey brings the food cart to the classroom. Ms. Tara proceeds to set her group's table with plates, plastic drinking glasses and utensils. When she is done, Mr. Nolan sets his group's table. They sit with their own primary group.

Ms. Tara serves noodles to her group so they don't wait too long to eat; it keeps them occupied too. The other food will be self-served by the toddlers with Ms. Tara's help or she will serve them if they are unable or do not want to. When she asks Ethan, age 28 months, if he wants peaches he replies, "No." Ms. Tara accepts his response saying, "Alright, Ethan. Peaches are a healthy fruit. If you change your mind, you can have some."

Ms. Tara also remarks to Ethan, "Ethan, that noodle must be slippery. It keeps sliding off of your spoon." Ethan giggles, which causes his peers and Ms. Tara to giggle. Serita says, "Peaches are cold." Ms. Tara replies, "They are cold. Mr. Casey keeps them in the refrigerator." Ethan then asks, "Me have peaches?" "Yes Ethan, I'll pass it to you," replies Ms. Tara. She passes it to him while helping him hold the bowl so he can maneuver the spoon.

Serita knocks over her milk, which she and Ms. Tara wipe up. Because Ms. Tara knows spills will happen, she doesn't let it frustrate her and doesn't get upset with Serita. Toddlers have a lot to learn and skills to master. Ms. Tara pours her another glass and the conversation continues.

Ms. Tara knows that routines help children understand what will happen next. She implements snack and lunch in a predictable way every day.



### Motor Development:

The child will coordinate the use of his or her hands, fingers and sight in order to manipulate objects in the environment.



### Emotional Development:

The child will recognize herself or himself as a person with an identity, wants, needs, interests, likes and dislikes.



### Language & Communication Development:

The child will convey a message or transfer information to another person.