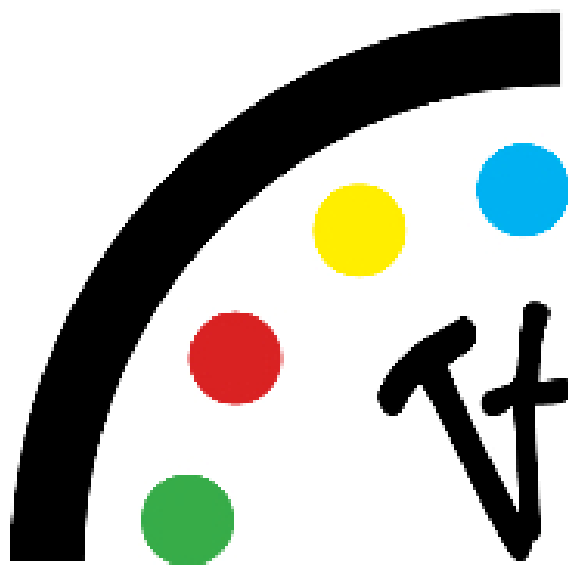


# Curriculum Guidance



**Toddlertime**  
Nursery School

*An Education for Life*

23 Park Street  
New Canaan, CT 06840  
[www.toddlertimens.org](http://www.toddlertimens.org)

# Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Philosophy	4
Mission	5
Conceptualization of the Toddlertime Curriculum	6
Resources for Curriculum Decisions and Practices	7
Process for Curriculum Development and Review	8
Expectations of Teachers for Curriculum and Planning	10
Lesson Plans	11
Documentation	12
Professional Development, Teacher Competencies, and Dispositions	13
Guiding Principles and Child Outcomes	14
Cycle of Intentional Teaching & Reflection	16
Curriculum Components	17
Early Learning Standards	18
Environment, Schedules, and Materials	19
Content	22
Processes and Experiences	25
Expectations across Domains of Development	37
Approaches to Teaching and Learning	59
Teacher Interaction	62
Assessment	65
Family and Cultural Connections	68

## Introduction

This document is intended to provide curriculum guidance to teachers of Toddlertime. Its purpose is to guide decision making around program planning and implementation rather than to dictate specific activities, schedules, and procedures. It is not intended to be a comprehensive prescriptive curriculum – instead it allows teachers to think creatively and with flexibility in order to use fresh, emergent, and continually evolving activities and strategies to meet the guidelines and criteria outlined within. Teachers are free to adjust to child interest and ability in order to effectively meet the best practices, content standards, and performance indicators around which this document was written. They are encouraged to be innovative, to think “outside the box,” and to take risks for the purpose of making children’s learning experiences exciting and extraordinary in order to fulfill the mission and philosophy of Toddlertime.

*“Whatever we learn to do, we learn by actually doing it; men come to be builders,  
for instance, by building, and harp players by playing the harp.  
In the same way, by doing just acts we come to be just; by doing self-controlled acts,  
we come to be self-controlled; and by doing brave acts, we become brave.”*  
~Aristotle

## Program Philosophy

The philosophy of Toddlertime is to provide exciting, innovative and active learning experiences in a secure and nurturing environment. Our goal is to explore topics and ideas from multiple perspectives with the help of real-world experts, tools, and experiences. We believe in process-based learning where children collaborate on projects driven by their curiosity, then represent and share their findings with others. Research tells us that rich curriculum and skill development are best delivered through carefully planned and facilitated play where learning goals are intentionally embedded.

Hands-on sensory and experiential learning engages the whole child. Since, young children think in concrete rather than abstract terms, they achieve a better understanding of their lessons by experiencing them through all their senses. We encourage children to feel, hear, see, smell and touch as well as read and write about their experiences in an integrated and meaningful way. Beyond the classroom, children explore the local community and participate in enrichment programs to further discovery and learning.

Our goals are based on the research of those who have done outstanding work in the fields of human development, education, and organizational development.

Our character education is guided by Ellen Galinsky *Mind in the Making: Seven Life Skills Every Child Needs* and by Paul Tough: *Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character*.

Emmy Werner, Michael Rutter, and John Bowlby have guided our practices of creating a learning environment that helps children to develop resilience - where taking initiative, forming positive attachments, and self-control are priorities.

Magda Gerber inspired our values on the need for young children to feel secure, competent, and confident and allow them to be curious, self-directed, and resourceful in pursuing learning. We support their interests, focus, and attentiveness to create highly engaged learners who are able to problem solve without excessive adult interference and which supports higher order thinking. Our aim is to teach children how to think rather than simply what to think.

Lev Vygotsky set forth the idea that social context and language are relevant to learning. Children will work to their greatest potential when learning is scaffolded by adults who are observant and responsive to their interests and abilities. We take a constructivist approach, derived from Piaget, believing that children bring meaning to the people, places, and things in their world through exploration, discovery, and problem-solving. We believe that collaborative investigation within a purposeful and rich environment is a powerful teacher.

Howard Gardner guides us to respecting each child's strengths and needs and to view intelligence as unique to each individual. Cognitive development is a complex integration of potential and achievement across multiple intelligences including spatial, linguistic, musical,

kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, natural, and logical-mathematical thought which all need to be nurtured from a young age in order to fully develop.

Children of the same age will not necessarily develop and learn at the same rate. Our classrooms provide the means for active learning giving children many opportunities to work at their own pace and level. This environment allows each child to attain success in all areas of their development as they are ready.

Our school is one where learning goes beyond academic preparation to also preparing children for life's challenges. The work of business leaders such as Peter Senge and Ronald Heifetz tells us that adaptability to change; perseverance, collaboration, and interpersonal communication are essential ingredients to success across all vocations. We believe that these must be nurtured from the earliest years of a child's life and apply classroom management strategies that do so. Together with families we are partners in developing young minds and character in such a way that will serve as a solid and meaningful foundation for later learning and also for life success.

Our approach to early childhood education is eclectic and dynamic. It is our philosophy to be a continually changing and improving organization that is responsive to the diverse needs of children and families as well as to the needs of the community and expectations of our state and national agencies that set policy and write legislation to the extent it pertains to the best interest of our program. We welcome the viewpoints of staff, families, and community partners and encourage them to ask questions and challenge our positions because through this process we can improve.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of ToddlerTime's educational program is to provide a foundation for success in life. With this goal in mind, our inspiration by leaders of education, business, and health fields has led us to create an educational program that not only prepares children for later success in school but also develops key skills that will serve children throughout life. Beyond creating academic achievement and life skills, we are committed to encouraging each child to develop as a unique individual.

Developmentally appropriate learning outcomes are met through opportunities and support for children to make decisions, take risks, develop compassion, work collaboratively as both a leader and a team player, persevere when challenged, take responsibility for their actions, and act with integrity. All of these attributes serve a person well throughout their school years as well as throughout life. We see the goal of ToddlerTime as beginning "an education for life."

*"Education must not simply teach work—it must teach life."*

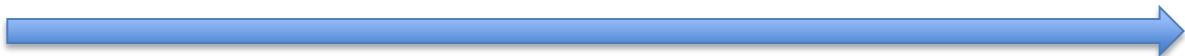
# A Conceptualization of the Toddlertime Curriculum

## Our Beliefs

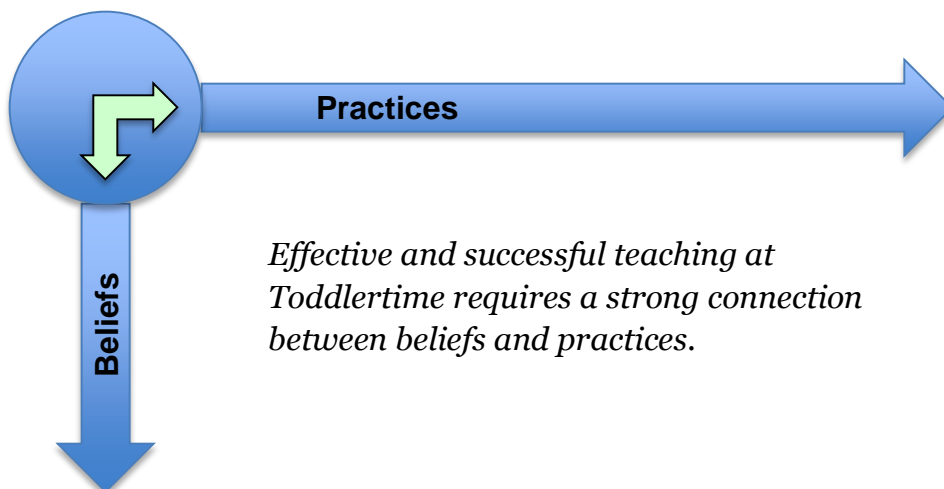


Children are capable of making good decisions  
Children construct their own learning – constructivism  
Risk taking is necessary to learning  
Children learn best in meaningful contexts  
Developmentally appropriate practice  
Social and cognitive development is an integrated process  
Family, community, and culture are factors in learning  
Learning is a joyful, playful experience

## Our Practices



Eclectic approaches to curriculum – emergent, unit study, project work  
Intentional teaching of early learning standards through child interest  
Use of provocation, investigation, and discovery through novel materials and activities  
Higher order thinking opportunities – implementation of Bloom's Taxonomy in conversation  
Flexibility & individualization in teaching supports – The Continuum of Teacher Behavior  
Teaching to the child's zone of proximal development and stage of learning  
Stratifying learning experiences by what children know, wonder about, and have learned - KWL  
Accountability for children's progress toward clearly defined goals  
Making learning visible to children, teachers, and families  
Intentionally planning and teaching using methods and activities that develop perseverance in problem-solving, risk-taking, effective communication, integrity, and collaboration



# Resources for Curriculum Decisions and Practices

*The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards – **Early Learning Standards***

*The Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework (PAF)- **Assessment***

*The Guide to Early Childhood Program Development – CT State Dept. of Education*

*Connecticut SRBI Embedded Strategies Manual – **Individualized teaching strategies***

*Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*-editors Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp – **Drives practice across all curriculum points**

*The Guide to Early Childhood Program Development (Ct SDE) – **Influences practice across all curriculum points***

*Action Guide For Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*-Connecticut State Department of Education – **Content for physical domain and family involvement**

*Active Start Physical Activity Guidelines for Birth to Age 5* - National Association for Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines – **Content for physical domain**

*CARA – Creating Adaptations for Routines and Activities – **Meeting special needs***

*NAEYC Standard on Curriculum – **Criteria for developing curriculum across all content areas***

*NAFME National Standards and Guidelines for Music Education – **Content in music***

*Anti-Bias Curriculum*, Louise Derman –Sparks, – NAEYC – **Guides practices related to diversity**

*Bloom’s Taxonomy – **Guides teacher interactions***

*Bredekamp and Rosegrant’s Learning Framework and Continuum of Teaching Behaviors – **Guides teacher interactions***

*Zone of Proximal Development – **Guides individualization***

*The KWL Model – **Guides content instruction***

*Developmentally Appropriate Play*, Gaye Gronlund, Redleaf Press

*Positive Behavior Support Systems in Early Childhood*, Stormont, Lewis, Beckner, Johnson (Corwin Press)

*Young Investigators –The Project Approach in the Early Years*, Helm and Katz, NAEYC

*Intentional Teaching with Provocations – Patricia Reinhardt*

**Resources for understanding developmental theory:**

*Frames of Mind*, Howard Gardner (Basic Books)

*Multiple Intelligences*, Howard Gardner (Basic Books)

*Theories of Childhood*, Carol Garhart Mooney (Redleaf Press)

*Mind in the Making*, Ellen Galinsky

*Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character*, Paul Tough

**Resources for literacy instruction:**

*Handwriting without Tears*

*Learning to Read and Write* (Policy Statement and Publication of NAEYC)

*Literacy Beginnings*, Pinnell and Fountas (Heinemann Publishers)

*Already Ready: Nurturing Writers in Preschool*, Ray and Glover, (Heinemann Publishers)

**Resources for creating a responsive learning environment:**

*Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (NAEYC): Environment and Schedule

NAEYC Standard and Criteria for the Physical Environment

*Designs for Living and Learning* (Redleaf Press)

*Inspiring Spaces for Young Children* (Gryphon House)

*Early Learning Environments that Work* (Gryphon House)

*The Hundred Languages of Children*, Edwards, Gandini, Forman (Praeger Publishers)



***The following blogs and websites are useful resources for teachers looking for ideas to implement in the classroom that are usually compatible with the philosophy and approach of Toddlertime. However, it will be necessary to evaluate each idea carefully to ensure its suitability to our curriculum and not simply assume it is appropriate.***

Teacher Tom  
*teachertombsblog.blogspot.com*

The Imagination Tree  
*theimaginationtree.com*

Irresistible Ideas for Play Based Learning  
*playbasedlearning.com.au/*

Teach Preschool  
*teachpreschool.org/*

Playfully Learning  
*playfullylearning.blogspot.com/*

Let the Children Play  
*letthechildrenplay.net/*

Teaching 2 and 3 Year Olds  
*teaching2and3yearolds.blogspot.com*

Play Counts  
*playcounts.com*

Casa Maria's Creative Learning Zone  
*casamarias.blogspot.com*

Sand and Water Tables  
*tomsensori.blogspot.com*

Childhood 101  
*childhood101.com*

Andy Goldsworthy - Playful Learning  
*playfullylearning.net*

Child Central Station  
*www.childcentralstation.com*

Tinker Lab  
*tinkerlab.com*

Community Playthings  
Collage Newsletter  
The Project Approach to Learning  
*communityplaythings.com*

Sylvia Chard – Project Approach  
*theprojectapproach.org*

Mind in the Making  
7 Life Skills Every Child Should Know  
*mindinthemaking.org*

## **Process for Curriculum Development and Review**

This curriculum document was developed by a team that included the program directors and education consultant following collaborative work to identify program values with all teachers. This curriculum is a living document that will change as new research and practices in the field of early childhood education emerge, and will also reflect current legislation that affects program operation and curriculum requirements. Curriculum review is part of the program's continuous quality improvement process and takes place at the close of each school year. Mid-year adjustments are made should legislative or policy changes dictate modifications.

## **Expectations of Teachers Regarding Curriculum and Planning**

Teachers are expected to utilize all of the resources listed within this curriculum on a consistent basis. Curriculum and professional development are closely matched and teachers will be held accountable for the implementation of curriculum through ongoing performance review.

Teachers are expected to read and research relevant material so that they understand the learning process and pedagogy that is the foundation for the curriculum. Each class will bring unique interests and abilities so teachers will need to change their program in order to reflect the interests of the children and to challenge themselves by trying new ideas and taking risks.

We are looking for creative, innovative and current lesson plans, which emphasize process over product without predictable outcomes and teachers who take risks and think "outside the box" in terms of creative and original ideas. Topics should emerge from the interests of the children and extend as long as the children are interested. We are more interested in in-depth (vertical) learning, than hopping from topic to topic across the year, delivering a shallow overview of general (horizontal) knowledge. Teachers are expected to plan and emphasize facilitated play experiences as well as provocations for children's investigation. Facilitated play within a rich social environment is at the heart of the philosophy of the Toddlertime program. Intentionally planning and teaching using methods and activities that develop perseverance in problem solving, appropriate risk-taking, decision-making, integrity, communication, and collaboration is expected. Teacher-directed activities will be kept to a minimum and only where it is appropriate and necessary. Extended project work that includes the emergent study of a topic in depth and detail as well as representation and sharing of learning – documented across the learning process – is expected of all classes on a regular basis. Units of study may also be used as long as they represent authentic, tangible, and relevant ideas. Teachers may use imaginative and fanciful topics as long as they are related to meaningful contexts with learning potential.

Teachers are required to write weekly lesson plans using forms provided by administration. Teachers will be provided time out of the classroom for the purpose of planning and organizing documentation and assessment data. Teachers are expected to write lesson plans on a computer, have it approved by the director by noon on the preceding Friday, and email it to parents before the start of the week. Lesson plans will be posted in each classroom so they are available for review by parents and others as required in CT regulation.

Additionally, teachers should anticipate their need for regular consumables and check supply stock and make requests two weeks in advance. For items needed quickly such as in response to emerging projects, “classroom cash” can be used.

Lesson plans will be monitored regularly by the directors and at least annually by the education consultant for conformation to the curriculum. They will provide written feedback to teachers and make recommendations for improvements.

## **Lesson Planning Requirements**

Teachers will write a weekly plan that focuses on three performance standards (two standards for 2s) from the CT Preschool Assessment Framework that will be embedded in general learning activities and content. Standards will be specifically linked to the activities on the plan where they will be taught and assessed. The lesson plan must name exact titles of books, songs, games, finger plays, and music selections and list an objective or purpose to each activity so that its value and content are clear. For example:

Group Meeting: Beyond routines already listed on the plan, a group lesson will be planned as well as introduction to the learning centers available.

Literacy: In addition to the book being read, the purpose, objective, or key question related to the book is listed.

Music and Movement: Consists of 2 different activities: movement to music, singing, or playing instruments. Music activities relate to at least one fundamental music concept: rhythm, tempo, dynamics, pitch, style, melody, or timbre. This is listed on the plan. Recorded musical games or moving to instructions are not considered music education and can be included in gross motor.

Outdoor/Gross Motor: A brief portion of each day is devoted to *structured* gross motor activity where all children participate. This can be indoors or outdoors. Other activities that extend learning to the outdoor space will be planned intentionally.

Facilitated Play: This section notes changes to the learning environment such as addition of new materials to inspire play or provocations to be set up on centers. The purpose or objective in each area will be listed.

Small Group and Individual Work: This may be project work, activities that extend understanding of a book, a science experiment, or small group lesson.

Topics and Questions to Answer: This should list any content being introduced or continuing. Questions should be those that support deep investigation and problem solving.

Teaching through Routines: List new routines that are being introduced or reinforced, but more important - any routine that can be modified to teach a standard.

Family Connections: This will be any opportunity for parents to come into the classroom, contribute to a project, or suggested activities they can do with their children to extend learning at home.

Teachers will also plan around the seven character traits that are the core of the Toddlertime curriculum. These are not necessarily activities planned separately for this purpose, but conscious effort to develop these traits within typical activities in a substantial way. Teachers should look for ways to modify activities to include these opportunities and code them along with the performance standards on the plan.

## Documentation Requirements

Teachers will document the learning process in two ways. Individual observations are to be documented by a method of the teacher's choice, organized into a child record, and used to create a child profile three times per year – November, March, and May. Additionally, teachers will document project work and the embedded learning with photographs, narratives, and children's work examples across the life of the project or unit of study on either a bulletin board **or** in a scrapbook, which is displayed for both parents and children. Documentation of learning can also be shared through other means of communication as requested or approved by administration such as blogs and newsletters. Child portfolios will be completed in all classes and a DVD of highlights of the school year will be done by administration and provided to all families. Teachers are expected to regularly photograph children in a manner that represents learning across the performance standards and character development.



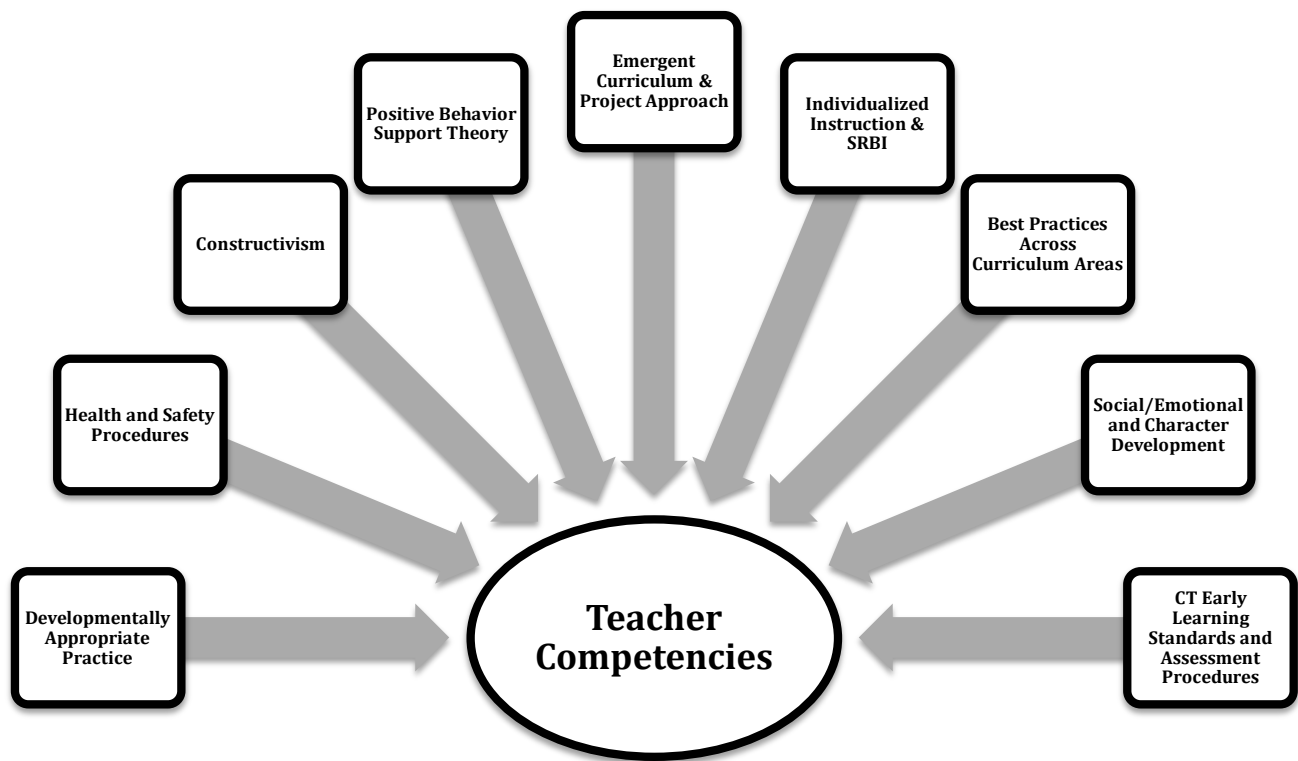
*It is documentation that provides the insight about children's learning and development.  
By making learning visible we illuminate the child's journey of investigation, discovery, and curiosity.  
Reflection on documentation allows us to plan pathways of learning for each child  
in ways that are meaningful to him.*

*~ Carlina Rinaldi, Reggio Emilia*

## Professional Development Opportunities Relative to Curriculum

The resources and tools that influence our curriculum are used as a focus of professional development activities such as trainings, coaching, consultation, and monitoring. It is expected that all staff develop understanding and competency in these “building blocks” and having them consistently represented in their learning experience plans. All staff members are required to complete a minimum of 1% of their annual work hours in professional development, which is satisfied through our staff meetings with outside consultants. We encourage and facilitate staff in exceeding this requirement by providing and funding opportunities to attend other workshops and conferences if they relate to the vision and goals of the Toddlertime curriculum and philosophy. We collect all professional development hours in a binder and add it up each year. Failure to meet minimum hours will result in probation with an obligation to make them up the following year. Failure to meet professional development requirements results in a violation of CT licensing regulations. The competencies and dispositions around which staff performance assessment and professional development will be built are as follows.

*The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn... and change. ~ Carl Rogers*



### Teacher Dispositions

*Collaboration ~ Integrity ~ Critical Thinking ~ Risk Taking ~ Creativity  
Perseverance in Problem Solving ~ Effective Communication ~ Adaptive to Change*

## Guiding Principles and Child Outcomes

The Toddlertime program encourages investigation as well as child initiative through which children will meet specific goals as outlined by the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards and beliefs in the following:

### We believe that children:

- Are capable and competent
- Learn best when their basic needs are met
- Are unique in their growth and development
- Develop and learn within the context of their family and culture

### We believe that families:

- Are the primary caregivers and educators of young children
- Are critical partners in all early learning environments
- Are strengthened through cultural understanding and identity development

### We believe that early learning environments:

- Support young children to learn in the context of positive relationships
- Reinforce the importance of the cultural context of young children, families, and communities
- Provide opportunities for active exploration
- Provide meaningful inclusion of children with special needs where appropriate
- Provide experiences that are relevant and integrated across domains of development
- Intentionally promote the development of skills and knowledge
- Provide opportunities for children to benefit from diversity
- Support children's language development in their primary language

### We believe that strong communities:

- Believe in, invest in, and provide a full range of high quality resources for young children and families that support early growth and development

Toddlertime has specific goals for character development derived from research and scholarly writing that cites specific traits and dispositions as necessary for long-term success in life. We base these goals on a combination of theories from education, business, and psychology that inspired our philosophy.

- Children will **communicate** effectively
- Children will **collaborate** with others
- Children will use **critical thinking** to make decisions
- Children will **engage** and **persevere** in problem solving
- Children will **take risks** in order to learn from experience
- Children will act with **self-control** and **integrity**
- Children will adapt to change with **resilience**

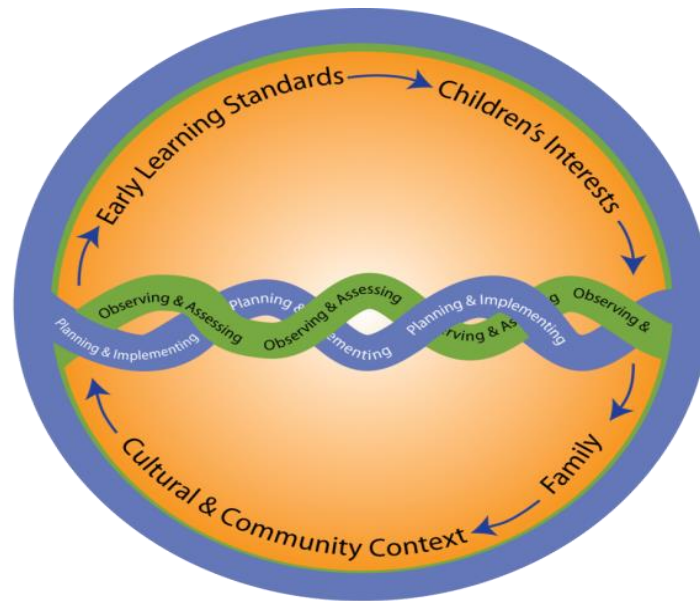
Additionally, our goal is to foster competent learners across all ages and domains of development. This is consistent with the essential dispositions outlined in the CT ELDS:

- **Creative**  
We will support young children's growth and development by encouraging creative thinking and novel approaches to solving problems. Children will have opportunities to create, express themselves in a variety of ways, and approach problems from new perspectives. The focus of early learning experiences will be on the process instead of the product, promoting learning, exploring and thinking over achieving a specific result or answer.
- **Inquisitive**  
We will encourage children to explore, seek new information and ask questions. We will help children feel comfortable questioning information, testing out new ideas, and simply playing with materials in new and unusual ways. We will create a safe environment in which children can explore and experiment.
- **Flexible**  
We will foster children's ability to adapt to new situations, to be flexible in their responses and to actively engage in new environments. We will promote resilience through exposure to new ideas, environments, and situations in meaningful ways.
- **Critical Thinkers**  
We will encourage children to use critical thinking skills to help them organize and use the great amount of information available today. We will support them to understand the concepts behind specific skills as well as provide opportunities for higher order thinking that allows them to question the accuracy of information they receive.
- **Purposeful and Reflective**  
We will promote children's engagement in purposeful action. Very young children should be actively involved in play and will benefit from reminders of the results of their actions. Preschool children should play an active role in planning experiences, setting goals, and celebrating accomplishments. They are encouraged to be reflective and to learn from mistakes.
- **Social Learners**  
We consider social interaction to form the basis for children's learning. We encourage children to interact with adults and peers, ask questions, and to jointly solve problems. We provide opportunities to learn through cooperative experiences with adults and children.

*The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office.*

*~ Dwight D. Eisenhower*

## The Cycle of Intentional Teaching



**Ongoing Cycle of Intentional Teaching**

**Teachers are guided by the cycle of intentional teaching.** Teachers plan learning experiences, the physical environment, and interactions to meet specific goals and performance standards of the CT Preschool Assessment Framework. Through child assessment and teacher reflection they are held accountable for meeting those standards and shall **use** that information to make decisions on future instruction.

**Teachers utilize reflection, which is the process that drives the cycle of intentional teaching.** Teachers will continually observe, question, re-evaluate, hypothesize, and think about the impact and result of their interactions, planning, design and implementation. This ongoing process helps them remain effective as teachers and achieve the optimal learning outcomes for students. The process of reflection includes three internal questions.





# Curriculum Components

The curriculum of Toddertime is intentional, responsive, and reflective. Beyond meeting standards, creativity, risk-taking, and thinking “outside the box” are encouraged for both children and teachers for the purpose of bringing joy, enthusiasm, and engagement into the classroom experience.

All of the components described in Connecticut State Department of Education publications and curriculum training materials relevant to early childhood are addressed in eight sections:

- 1. Early learning standards**
- 2. Environment, scheduling, and materials**
- 3. Content**
- 4. Processes and experiences across the curriculum**
- 5. Approaches to teaching and learning**
- 6. Teacher interactions**
- 7. Ongoing assessment**
- 8. Family and community**

*“The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, is nothing, and becomes nothing. He may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he simply cannot learn and feel and change and grow and love and live.”*

*~ Leo F. Buscaglia*

# **1. Early Learning Standards**

---

## **The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards**

All learning experiences are planned to meet the goals and performance standards of the CT Early Learning and Development Standards. This document is the centerpiece of the curriculum as it provides standardized expectations for children across eight domains of development. The CT ELDS is a publication of the CT Office of Early Childhood and is designed to articulate with the National Common Core State Standards that are in place in all public and approved independent schools in Connecticut. In addition, we have character development goals that must be considered when planning learning experiences.

Each domain of the ELDS contains strands that specify broad outcomes for curriculum. Within each of these strands are learning progressions with age-appropriate performance indicators from birth through age five. Each indicator is coded by domain and age for easy reference.

Please see the separate manual:

### **CT ELDS**

#### **Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards**

*What children, birth to five, should know and be able to do*

CT Office of Early Childhood

*“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”*

*~Albert Einstein*

## **2. Environment, Scheduling, Materials**

### ***NAEYC's Physical Environment: A Guide to the NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standard:***

“Why Is a Program’s Physical Environment Important to Quality?”

The physical environment of early care and learning environments reflects the goals, values, and expectations of programs. Environments can support relationships, supports children’s development and independence, support staff members, and contribute to a general community of caring (Greenman 2005). A high quality environment welcomes children; engages children in a variety of activities; provides space for individual, small group, and large-group activities; and generally supports the program’s philosophy and goals.

The physical environment sets the stage and creates the context for everything that happens in any setting—a classroom, a play yard, a multipurpose room. It is a place where children and staff spend multiple hours each day; where routine needs are met; where relationships are developed, skills are learned, abilities are enhanced, and attitudes toward school and learning are formed. For all of those things to happen well, program planners must carefully design the physical environment to support the development of children; welcome program families; and provide for the health, safety and comfort of all who use it.

The physical environment goes beyond the building, the equipment, and the materials. It is an active entity that conveys values and messages about who is welcomed, what is important, and what the beliefs are about how children learn.”



**The environment is seen as another teacher and will indirectly provide the following guidance to children:**

- Organization teaches respect for materials and indirect instruction on where they belong
- Aesthetics teach an appreciation for beauty and order, balance, and scale
- Clutter-free spaces teach children to appreciate order
- Calming spaces (visual and auditory) help children self-regulate and focus
- Interesting, challenging materials support curiosity and engagement and teach higher order thinking skills
- Authentic materials teach children functional skills
- Accessibility teaches independence and self-direction
- Displays of work samples and photographs of children and families give children a sense of ownership and pride
- Open-ended materials teach creativity, exploration, and inquiry
- A visible and consistent schedule teach self-direction, self-regulation, and responsibility
- Choices in seating and grouping support social learning
- Literacy rich environments send the message that reading and writing are powerful tools
- Subject-specific learning centers create awareness and invite exploration of new ideas
- Intentional display of materials directs children to specific learning opportunities



**Required Centers:**

Art/Sensory  
Math/Manipulatives  
Science  
Music  
Blocks  
Writing  
Dramatic Play  
Library  
Quiet/Cozy area  
Computers/Technology if present

Teachers are expected to create and maintain an aesthetically pleasing and effective environment for learning that reflects these guidelines. In addition, set up and break down of classrooms will be done according to the established schedule of the church for sharing space.

## **Daily Classroom Schedules and Time Frames**

Each lead teacher is responsible for developing a regular but flexible classroom schedule, which must be posted for review by parents and others. A visual linear schedule must also be posted and utilized with the children to provide a sense of security that predictability and self-regulation brings.

While teachers will be provided with scheduled playground and music times, the order of the day may be determined at the discretion of the teacher, as long as it meets children's needs and provides a logical and comfortable flow to the day. It is expected that child-initiated and teacher-directed activities will be balanced, as will active and quiet activities, and small group, large group, and individual settings for learning which meet national and state standards. A typical day will include each of these components with the following time allotments that may be lengthened depending on the length of the day:

- Starting group meeting (routines, project/topic work, and introduction to the choices in the learning environment) must be right before facilitated play– 15 minutes
- Literacy in group format – 15 minutes
- Music and movement in group format – 15 minutes
- Facilitated play (child choice within the learning environment) - at least 60 minutes
- Outdoor or gym including a time of structured activity – at least 30 minutes
- Snack
- Summary group meeting (organizing for pick-up, summarizing the day)

## **Materials**

All classrooms will be equipped with a variety of commercial toys and equipment necessary to provide meaningful learning experiences relative to the CT Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks. This will include at minimum: a full set of unit blocks, dramatic play items, puzzles, manipulatives, sensory tables and media, art supplies and easel, books, and music education materials. We also strongly believe in the value of natural materials, found objects, and recyclables as they are used in learning activities. It is expected that a balance of natural and commercial materials be utilized, and that whenever possible that authentic objects be provided to children for investigation and play. Gross motor equipment is available on the playground and in Smith Hall.

Since invention, problem solving, and creativity are highly valued and form core beliefs in constructivism and the Toddlertime curriculum, it is advantageous that children construct their own representations for play as they see necessary.

Use of interesting objects and materials in unconventional ways is strongly encouraged as opportunities present themselves. This means that teachers will seek novel approaches to creating provocations and learning activities.

# 3. Content

---

Content includes the subject matter and topics that children will study. They are the vehicles where performance standards are embedded and are planned to reflect child interest. Toddlertime promotes emergent curriculum and the **project approach** as a rich, valued, and effective means of working with content in a way that promotes vertical learning (in depth) rather than other methods that provide only horizontal learning (brief, shallow). The project approach has a growing research base of efficacy in teaching children collaboration, higher order thinking, problem solving, and process skills. Evidence shows that topics defined as:

- **Emergent** – observed as an interest of the children
- **Relevant** to the lives of the children
- **Authentic**
- **Tangible**
- **Close to home**

are the most engaging for children, and yield the richest learning opportunities. They must also be worthy of study in depth (Katz & Helm, 2011). This does not mean that other topics that are purely practical or timely cannot be introduced to the children as units of study – but they are not likely to lead to the in-depth investigation and representation that are part of the project approach. Fanciful topics may also emerge into project work or topic studies, and must be developed so that they provide meaningful learning opportunities. Emergent curriculum can lead to both projects and unit studies. The following examples show focused study of topics in contrast to broad themes that are not part of the Toddlertime curriculum:

Not This	Instead..
Fall	A study of apples – varieties and growth cycle
Spring	A study of birds – migration, life cycle, varieties, habits
Winter	A study of snow – freeze/thaw, change, weather, effects
Animals	A study of cats – breeds, characteristics, care, behavior
Community Helpers	A study of chefs – cooking, restaurants, food
Transportation	A study of cars – models, parts, mechanics
Nutrition	A study of the grocery store
The Five Senses	Integrate this into scientific investigation across all studies.
Shapes	Embed this concept into any topic study or project

Content begins with a structure that provides opportunities to increase awareness, exploration, inquiry, and utilization of new skills and concepts – the stages of Bredekamp and Rosegrant’s Learning Framework. Often, topics for investigation are introduced by the teacher with carefully designed provocations that create awareness that there is something of interest to be investigated. Teachers will observe and reflect on the children’s explorations and hypothesize on where they may lead. The teacher will expand on what they see emerge from the children and create new provocations that create learning pathways for children, and engage in

conversations that include rich and meaningful inquiry where experimentation with application, analysis, and creativity must be used to answer questions and solve problems. Finally, the opportunity for utilization and sharing of learning is the capstone of this work, accomplished by children representing and explaining their work to others in a variety of ways. A framework for this type of learning is the KWL model. Teachers stratify the children's learning by helping them identify:

- What they currently **know** about a topic
- What they **wonder** about the topic
- What they have **learned** about the topic

The teacher's role is then to facilitate this process and make it visible to the children and others. Use of webs, lists, journals, and documentation of learning are important tools. The emphasis is not on the products of learning, but the process.

*"It is not what you know, but how you came to know it that is important."  
~from Reggio Emilia*

Whether a unit study topic is introduced by the teacher, or one initiated by the child – if it is to lead to rich project work, content topics will come from the subject areas of science and nature, social studies, author or artist study (**not** isolated skills and concepts such as colors, shapes, letters, or numbers because these are embedded in all topics) and must provide the opportunity to explore in depth ideas and concepts that support higher order thinking, life skills, and/or social values. The topics, unless associated with a particular season or occasion, should be planned with an open-ended time frame depending upon child interest or the success and scope of the topic.

Content topics are designed to have embedded within them specific skill development and concept understanding as it is represented in the CT Early Learning and Development Standards. In other words, the early learning standards are not taught in an isolated way, but rather through rich content where children are using specific skills in meaningful contexts. The domains and strands of the ELDS that are most relevant to topic studies and project work are:

### **Science:**

#### Applying scientific practices

- Questioning and solving problems
- Investigating
- Using evidence

#### Engaging in the process of engineering

- Design cycle

#### Understanding patterns, process, and relationships of living things

- Unity and diversity of life
- Living things and their interactions with the environment and each other

Understanding physical science

- Energy, force, and motion
- Matter and its properties

Understanding features of earth

- Earth's features and the effects of weather and water
- Earth and human activity

### **Social Studies:**

Understanding self, family, and a diverse community

- Individual development and identity
- Culture

Learning about people and the environment

- Power, authority and governance
- People, places, and environments
- Civic deals and practices

Developing an understanding of economic systems and resources

- Individuals, groups, and institutions
- Production, distribution, and consumption
- Science, technology, and society

Emergent curriculum has at its core the interests of the child. This is a foundational concept related to the egocentrism that is healthy in early childhood – children will learn best when they are interested and self-directed. Success with emergent curriculum relies on teachers who trust that children are capable of being protagonists of their own learning and need facilitation and scaffolding more than direct instruction. Emergent curriculum requires that teachers observe children's play and reactions as well as listen to their conversations. It is not a survey of what children want to learn, but what they actually demonstrate they are currently investigating. Emergent is about the here and now with respect to the immediate future, not planning in advance by weeks or months. It includes spontaneity and flexibility.

Content topics as well as processes and experiences are designed to have embedded within them specific skill development and concept understanding as it is represented in the CT ELDS. In other words, the early learning standards are not taught in an isolated way, but rather through rich content where children are using specific skills in meaningful contexts.

*"Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve."*

*~ Roger Lewin*



# 4. Processes and Experiences

---

There are seven learning experiences that will be offered to all children on a consistent and regular basis throughout the year. These are overarching experiences that integrate learning across all domains of development and subject areas. Each has a significant contribution to fulfilling the philosophy of Toddlertime, meeting national standards, and developing character traits that are a focus of the program. They are:

- Purposeful play that is facilitated by an adult
- The use of provocation as an intentional teaching strategy
- Project work that follows the emergent interests of children and includes field work
- Loose parts play
- Construction and block play
- Sensory play (sand, water, tactile substances, natural materials, hands-on learning)
- Learning through movement
- Group meetings

In addition, a well planned and executed process for the delivery of small or large group lessons is outlined.

Toddlertime follows current research and best practice that values play as the most effective way children learn. Our curriculum is rooted in constructivism that emerges from the Piagetian theory of cognitive development. We also believe in the importance of the social contexts in which learning occurs – supporting the development of important skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, and risk-taking. Vygotsky tells us that all learning takes place through social relationship and discourse. We strongly believe that for the child, this discourse is around play – and that play brings great joy to the learning experience. The teacher's job is to inspire, facilitate, and mediate play opportunities for children so that learning does in fact occur through this medium. It is through provocation, project work, and staged center-based exploration that children will engage in constructive and meaningful play.

## **Play and Socio-Constructivism:**

- A strong belief that children's learning is related to a social context
- Cognitive learning is not separated from emotional state and learning
- Wanting to know (curiosity) is a natural and desirable state. People naturally seek investigation.
- The natural desire to learn is enhanced by rich environments and contexts where others are influencing our interactions with others and things.
- Play is research. It is solving problems. It is where children demonstrate that they are protagonists of their own learning.
- Teachers influence children's play and research through provocation and proposals in the environment

*"It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them."*

*~ Leo Buscaglia*

## Stages of Play: (Parton)

- Unoccupied Play: The child is observing, not playing
- Solitary Play: The child is playing alone, uninterested in others. Typical in children under age 3.
- Onlooker Play: The child watches others at play but does not engage in it. They may talk about the play but do not join in together. Typical in children ages 2-3.
- Parallel Play: The child plays close to others, often imitating their actions. Typical for ages 2.5-4.
- Associative Play: The child is interested and interactive with others in play, but the play is not organized or coordinated. Typical of children ages 3-4.
- Cooperative Play: The child is interested in both other children and the activity. Play is organized around a common theme with each child having a role. Typical of ages 4.5-6.

## Types of Play: (Bronson, NAEYC)

Active	Make-Believe	Manipulative	Creative	Learning
Physical Outdoors Sports	Dolls Role play Scenes	Construction Puzzles Patterns	Music Arts Audio-Visual	Books Games Skills

While child-initiated play-based activities are emphasized, there will be some exposure to teacher-directed experiences where appropriate such as music and movement, story time, group meetings, small group work, and gross motor games. Such experiences will respect the children's interest and attention span and provide supports or alternative activities when necessary to the individual needs of the child. It will be recognized that subjecting children to incomprehensible learning situations in which they cannot be successful or are not ready is highly detrimental to their emotional development and will affect their attitude and ability to learn in the future. A goal of Toddlertime is that children experience joy in the learning process.

*"What children need is not new and better curricula but access to more and more of the real world; plenty of time and space to think over their experiences, and to use fantasy and play to make meaning out of them; and advice, road maps, guidebooks, to make it easier for them to get where they want to go (not where we think they ought to go), and to find out what they want to find out."*

*~John Holt*

Learning experiences are planned with intentionality - based on embedding the performance standards and opportunities to develop character traits into content wherever possible. These activities are designed to provide problem solving and investigative opportunities where higher order thinking is emphasized. Everyday routines such as transitions, cleaning up, meal times, hand washing, group meeting, arrival and departure are adjusted to reflect the learning strands and character traits.

Learning experiences are designed to differentiate across a range of ages and abilities that reflect the four stages of Bredekamp and Rosegrant's Learning Framework (awareness, exploration, inquiry, and utilization) which relate to the progression of benchmarks for each performance standard to be taught and assessed. Structured learning opportunities take place in the classroom, outdoors, and in the community. Settings for learning include facilitated play, group meeting, group literacy, music and movement, small group extension activities related to books and topics, and outdoor play – including a structured gross motor activity daily. The classroom schedule may include some special areas of instruction across the week.

Learning experiences are drawn from a range of resources including books and online sources included in this curriculum as well as from teacher imagination. All learning experiences are required to be designed around the content and performance standards of the CT Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks, character development goals of Toddlertime, or national standards specific to content areas such as music, physical education, dance, math, science, art, technology, and literacy.



# Provocation as a Teaching Strategy

A provocation is a deliberate action on the part of the teacher to capture interest and inspire learning about a topic, concept, or skill. Provocations come in different forms:

- A display to look at
- An interaction – particularly a higher order question – during children’s play
- An activity to explore that has specific intent

Provocations have specific purpose. They provide opportunities for thinking, discovery, experimentation, and often creativity. They provide a spark from which children’s emerging interests can develop and be observed. Provocations can be used to meet specific learning standards, with the process and progress documented by the teacher.

Teachers are expected to stage learning opportunities by using provocation on a daily basis in the classroom. A technique for creating effective provocations follows.

## AAAA

### A Technique for Creating Effective Provocations

#### Attractive

Tune in to children’s interests.

Choose materials that are irresistible and compelling – evoke curiosity.

Materials should be of high quality.

Stage materials in a unique or novel way.

Create an arrangement that is aesthetically pleasing. Avoid a “flat” presentation.

Use perspective, reflection, light and shadow to enhance presentation.

The provocation should invite children to investigate.

Remember that what is attractive to children is *active* – they want to move, construct, and play.

#### Authentic

The outcome is meaningful, useful learning.

Use real tools and materials.

Use real resources for research and reference.

Use real methods of investigation that will serve into the future.

Relate the fanciful or imaginary to reality and fact.

Choose subject matter that is relevant to the child’s world.

#### Asks a Question

A good provocation provides an opportunity to answer a question by problem solving.

The provocation requires investigation in order to solve the problem.

It should be obvious to an observer what the intended objective is.

Build provocations around early learning standards.

Write the question on a sentence strip and place it with the provocation.

The question should require a higher order thinking process.

#### Accountability

Children must demonstrate their learning by representing it to others.

Representation of learning can be by drawing, writing, construction, graphing, or display.  
Children have to be able to explain their learning to others.  
Documentation of the learning process can make learning visible to children, teachers and families.

## **The Project Approach**

Project work includes a wide range of activities and behaviors that students engage in for the purpose of gaining information, solving problems, proving assumptions, and collecting data. The investigation that is central to project work allows students to explore possibilities and find answers using any of the following ways:

Research and reading  
Experimentation  
Trial and error  
Hypothesizing, predicting, and testing  
Comparing and differentiating  
Using tools to examine, measure, construct, analyze, evaluate, and create  
Surveying and interviewing to get information

Although investigation can be undertaken individually, it is most valuable when designed so that several students can work collaboratively. In early childhood, investigation will have playful qualities that encourage a student's curiosity and persistence. It also results in the student having to represent their learning in meaningful ways that utilize skills such as reading, writing, speaking, representational drawing, music, movement, and construction. Additionally, investigation supports the development of skills that have been defined as essential to success in life by The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

## **Learning and Innovation Skills**

Learning and innovation skills are what separate students who are prepared for increasingly complex life and work environments in today's world and those who are not. They include:

- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration

## **Information, Media and Technology Skills**

Today, we live in a technology and media-driven environment, marked by access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technology tools and the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. Effective citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills, such as:

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Information, Communications and Technology Literacy

## **Life and Career Skills**

Today's life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge. The ability to navigate the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age requires students to pay careful attention to developing adequate life and career skills, such as:

- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Self-Direction
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- Productivity and Accountability
- Leadership and Responsibility

Project work is a productive part of rigorous curriculum, where students must be creative, innovative, critical thinkers who can use a variety of media to solve problems in collaboration with others. Students will be held accountable for their learning through representation and sharing with others. Project work in preschool lays a foundation for life-long skill development. It is expected that all classes will engage in long-term project work that results from emergent curriculum.

*“A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about. Its key feature is that it is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed either by the children, the teacher, or the teacher working with the children. ”*

*~ Lilian Katz*

Project work provides children with the opportunity to study topics of interest in depth and relates directly to the development of character traits and child outcomes we value at Toddlertime.

Project work follows a very specific outline of steps and processes as follows:

### **Pre-Project Steps**

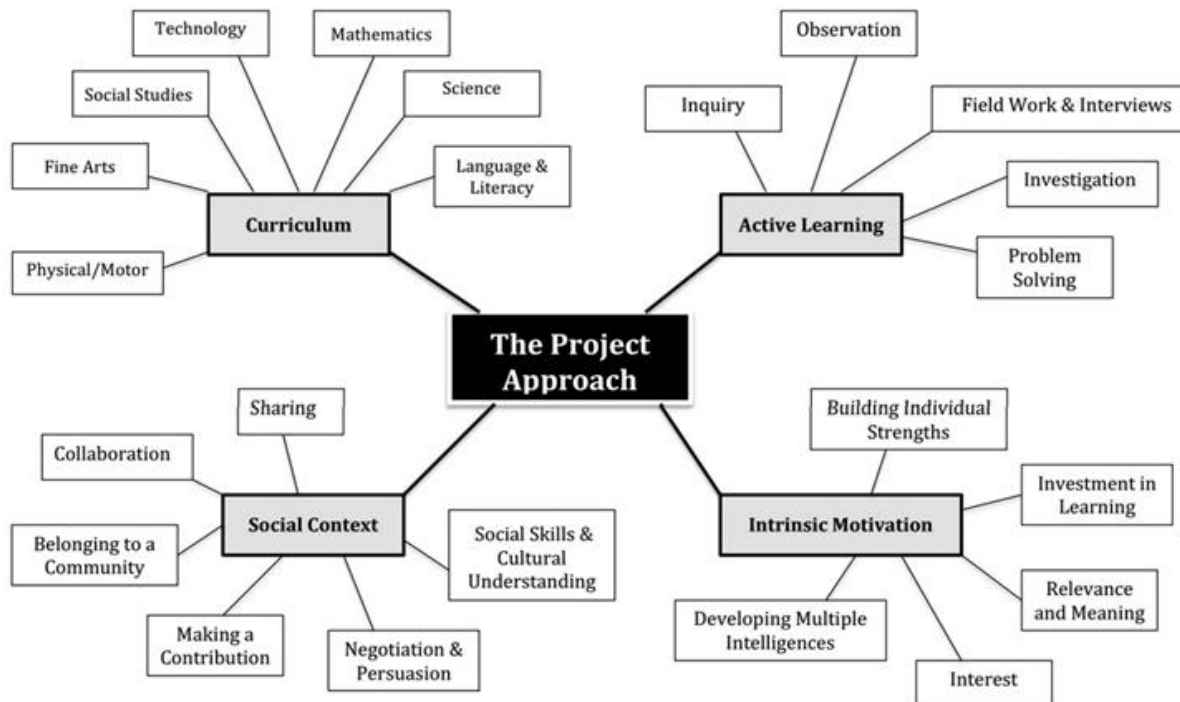
1. Either children or teacher might initiate a topic that leads to project work. Teachers generally spark interest through provocations and proposals for exploration.
2. Observe and listen to children during the day and document actions, behaviors and conversations of the children.
3. Identify a topic that seems to be a continuing interest to children (individual, small or large group). It should meet the criteria of authentic, tangible, and relevant.
4. Decide on the value of the topic. Can it...
  - Build on what the children already know?
  - Help them to make better sense of the world they live in?
  - Offer children ideas for dramatic play and other forms of representation?
  - Help children and teachers seek resources outside the school?
  - Facilitate communication with parents?
  - Integrate literacy, math, social studies, and science?

### **Project Development**

1. Beginning:
  - Teacher creates an aesthetically pleasing environment that creates opportunities for children’s learning – visual and verbal provocations.
  - Teacher observes and listens to children’s inquiries and comments related to their environment and experiences.
  - Teacher documents children’s interests and awareness about a topic to determine appropriate directions for content using graphic organizers such as webs that are mounted on the project board. The web guides the project and can be modified as children’s interests emerge.
  - Teachers and children negotiate curriculum and agree on ways to explore topic.

- Teachers find out what children already know and what they want to know - questions to answer emerge using KWL. KWL charts are mounted on the project board and used throughout the life of the project.
2. Investigation and Representation:
- Children research and gather information through a variety of teacher-selected and child-initiated learning experiences.
  - Children work individually and in small groups to investigate related skills and concepts.
  - Partnerships in the community, with families, with each other to support learning.
  - Field work is done as a part of research and investigation
  - Children record and represent their knowledge and learning using a variety of media – collaborative construction, invention, and creation. Collaborative work is essential.
  - Teachers interact to inspire inquiry and further exploration, raising level of thinking and supporting the use of tools and skills.
  - Teachers observe and document the learning process and evidence of learning, including generalization of new learning in new applications. They make the documentation visible to children and families, and use it to guide the project work over time.
3. Conclusion:
- Children summarize and organize information learned and share with classmates and families ~ reporting, representations, and exhibits.
  - Project work is evaluated by children and teachers through inquiry, observation, and documentation.
  - Assessment is made by evaluating documentation and evidence.
  - Assessment information is summarized and shared to inform future instruction.

*Engaging Children's Hearts and Minds through the Project Approach*  
*Embedding State Learning Standards and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills*



Adapted from the work of Sylvia Chard

## Loose Parts Play

Loose parts are easily moved materials that may be used by children while playing. They may be found materials such as sticks, leaves, or rocks – or they may be provided materials like boxes, parachutes, tricycles, and hula hoops. In addition, loose parts may include “junk” items such as mechanical parts, recyclables, and odds and ends from one’s attic or basement. Anything of interest that might be useful in creative constructions and dramatic play can become part of a loose parts collection. Although it is more typical to find such collections outdoors, it is possible to use them indoors as well, though perhaps on a smaller scale. Loose parts play supports the goals and development of character traits we value at Toddlertime and will be a regular part of the child’s experience.

Dempsey and Strickland give many valid reasons for including loose parts play in the curriculum that are further supported by the highly regarded work of Simon Nicholson on environmental education.

1. Loose parts encourage children to manipulate their environment, allowing them the necessary experimentation and interaction that Piaget points out is essential to learning. It is a very different experience than using only fixed equipment that has limited purpose and less opportunity for creativity and problem solving.



2. Children prefer play equipment that provides more opportunity for movement of the equipment as well as variability of use. These factors contribute to the degree of inventiveness and possibility of discovery in the activity.
3. Loose parts provide age-appropriate experiences for children because different ages will use them in ways particular to the age group.
4. Loose parts promote a wide variety of play behaviors including construction, dramatic play, physical exercise, games with rules, and socialization/cooperation with others.
5. Loose parts give hands-on experiences with physical science and social studies concepts. Mathematical concepts such as shape, quantity, patterns, and attributes are also inherent.
6. Loose parts provide and opportunity for the highest order thinking – creativity.

Loose parts play can be inspired by provocations, become a part of project work, used as a resource of materials for project construction, or a free choice resource for children. Work with loose parts will evoke curiosity, which can be developed into related topic studies and projects that have rich learning and investigation opportunities.

*“When curiosity turns to serious matters, it’s called research.”*

*~Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach*

## **Inspiring and Supporting Construction and Block Play**

Block play is an activity that integrates learning across all domains – social, physical, cognitive, language and literacy, mathematical, science, social studies, and creative arts. All classrooms will offer block play on a daily basis and plan provocations that relate to child interest regularly. Some suggestions include:

- Create a provocation: a partially started construction with some accessories and inspiring photographs placed in an interesting way.
- Model: “I’m going to build a town.” Narrate your own work. “This is the store, but I need a road that comes to it. Now I’m going to build a garage and gas stations. I wonder how I could make a gas pump.”
- Narrate a child’s construction. Make an “I wonder” statement to spark an idea.
- Pose a problem or challenge: “I wonder if you could...”
- Create an experiment: “I wonder what might happen if...” “Do you want to try it?”
- Start a project using a visual prompt: “I built a hospital and I need beds for the patients – just like in this book.”

- Inspire construction with beautiful photographs: “In the block area I have placed some pictures of bridges. Some of them are bridges you may have seen around here. I wonder who can make a bridge with blocks?”
- Read a book about construction equipment/trucks: Leave the book, construction trucks, and a pile of blocks on display.
- Create or buy a set of construction pattern cards for children to use. Do one yourself and put in on display with the other cards.
- Have children draw what they build, photograph the construction, and display the photo and drawing together to share with families.
- Add unique materials to the block area: rulers and other tools, pencil and paper on clipboards, large sheets of plain paper, graph paper, dress up clothes, lengths of fabric, natural materials such as sticks cut to different lengths, people, photos of the children fastened to cylinder blocks so they will stand up, signs from around the community, etc.
- Add blocks to another interest area such as the sand table, dramatic play, or art area for sketching constructions.



## **Sensory Play**

Young children are sensory learners, meaning that they take in and process information most effectively when it includes touch. Young children explore not only with eyes and ears, but their mouths, noses, and hands. Multisensory learning experiences strengthen sensory integration, learning, and retention of information. Several measures of quality for early childhood environments call for sensory activities to be available to children for a substantial portion of the day. Sand and water play are basic activities that will be offered daily. Additional experiences with tactile substances such as dirt and mud, gooey mixtures, pourables and moldables will also be offered. Incorporating natural materials such as sticks, stones, shells, leaves, bark, and flowers for investigation, construction, and design is also expected.

## **Learning Through Movement**

A child's mind and body are an integrated unit, and it isn't difficult to understand why moving and learning are related. Movement enhances early brain development, neurological organization, sensory integration, visual and auditory processing, coordination, eye-hand coordination, and motor planning. The brain supports all motor functions and works with muscles to execute any task. In early childhood, the task of the brain is to develop neural networks that help brain cell communication. Consistent, repeated, and multisensory learning

experiences strengthen brain network connections that lead to gains in cognitive understanding and an increased ability to retrieve information in new situations. The developing brain uses incoming sensory, perceptual, and movement information to “wire” the young child’s brain. When children move while learning, the learning “sticks.” Movement activities that benefit the brain fall into several categories:

1. Those that are multisensory where the brain receives information through a combination of hearing, seeing, touching, and movement.
2. Those that cross the midline that are important for the brain to be able to transmit information between hemispheres.
3. Those that provide vigorous exercise that results in elevated heart rate and deep breathing that oxygenates the brain when a person is tired or feeling lethargic.
4. Movement to music that combines experiences with rhythm, language, and movement that results in language development.

Most concepts and skills that are important for young children to learn can be taught through movement, and many activities that are typically sedentary can be enhanced with the addition of movement and music. Examples of how to build a lesson around a movement activity are:

- Passing a ball back and forth when calling upon children to answer questions.
- Using a song with movements to teach colors, shapes, direction, and spatial terms such as Hap Palmer’s *Learning Basic Skills Through Music*.
- Combining a game with a sorting activity. Instead of sorting buttons into cups by color while sitting at a table, children run back and forth in a relay race to sort balls into baskets or throw colored beanbags into colored bins.
- Use an action song such as *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes* to teach the names of body parts instead of simply naming the parts in a sedentary activity.

## Group Meetings

A morning group meeting anchors the day. It provides a starting point to an organized schedule of activities to come. It is a time when teachers can both get a sense of the children’s mindset as well as set the tone for the day. Children feel more secure when they are in a predictable setting where they are familiar with routines. The morning meeting is often the first routine of the day for the whole class and is an introduction to what will happen throughout the day. Morning meeting is most effective when it immediately precedes choice time at centers.

### Five parts of a meaningful morning meeting:

1. **Greeting** – sometimes in the form of a good morning song to get children settled  
“How are you today? Does anyone have anything they would like to share since we last saw each other?”
2. **Routines** – Checking the calendar (not a drawn out calendar lesson), weather, helpers, and schedule of the day (a visual schedule is useful).

3. **Lesson** – a brief and engaging activity where everyone *actively participates* rather than just listens. It should have a clear objective related to a project, topic study, and embedded standard(s).
4. **Behavior reminders** – This is a good time to talk about previous behavior, reinforcing what went well and noting any problems. State a plan for how problems will be handled if they occur again and remind children of the behavioral expectations.
5. **Choice of center activities** – Introduce the children to the activities that are new or set out at each center and give a brief description or demonstration. If the group is not too large, you can tour the room to do this. Dismiss children individually or in small groups to the centers where they choose to begin.

### **To be considered in planning morning meetings:**

- **Attention span** of the children. Typical expectations are no more than 15 minutes in teacher-directed activities for preschoolers – adjustments should be by individual needs.
- **Alternative choice** (close by) for children who are not ready or able to participate.
- **Comfortable physical space** for each child – who needs preferential seating or support strategies, do children prefer to have a defined space to sit, how will we avoid crowding?
- Do we move along at a **pace** where children are not getting bored or distracted? Does everyone have a chance to participate? Are there enough materials for everyone to avoid long waits for turn-taking?

### **Summary meetings:**

A second meeting is beneficial just before going home to wrap up the day, summarize what was experienced and learned, and finding out what children's perceptions are of how the day went and what they are looking forward to the next day they come.

## **Eight Steps in Structuring Effective Lessons**

### **1. Introduction to the Activity**

- How will you generate excitement for the activity?
- Use a book, photographs, or object that represents the activity.
- Ask questions to see if children have any familiarity with the activity.

### **2. Explain the Expectations**

- Tell children exactly what they will be doing: first, then, last
- Describe how you want them to do it
- Relate how they will do it to the introduction
- Tell children the behavior you expect and what they cannot do – and what the consequences will be.

### **3. Model the Activity**

- Show children how to do the activity

- Describe what you are doing while doing it
  - Call attention to details they need to notice
- 4. Support Children's Imitation or Trial of the Activity**
    - Have children join you in the activity, or try it for themselves
    - Provide as much support as needed for them to be successful
    - Adjust supports/assistance – use verbal or physical prompts
    - Acknowledge success by describing how the child has been successful
  - 5. Let Children Do the Activity Independently**
    - Gradually fade your supports and assistance
    - Be ready to step back in when needed (time-delayed prompting)
    - Acknowledge success by describing child's accomplishment
  - 6. Differentiate Instruction and Supports**
    - Adjust the activity and instructional supports to suit the ability and needs of each child. This can be done by modifying materials, providing verbal or physical guidance, adding more complex materials, simplifying materials or instruction, and adjusting interactions to evoke a range of lower to higher order thinking.
  - 7. Ask Children to Describe What They Learned or Did**
    - Ask questions such as, "What did you like most about this activity?" "What did you learn to do?" and "What is something else we could do with this?"
    - At some point in the future when the activity is repeated, have one child teach or model it to others.
  - 8. Document and Assess the Learning**
    - Capture child progress through work samples, photographs, and anecdotal notes that explain exactly what the children did and said.

# **Implementation of Content Across Domains of Development**

## **Cognition**

**Social and Emotional Development**  
**Physical Development and Health**  
**Language and Literacy**  
**Creative Arts**  
**Mathematics**  
**Science**  
**Social Studies**

# **How Toddlertime teachers will implement the strands of the CT Early Learning and Development Standards**

## **Domain L: Language and Literacy**

This curriculum reflects the CT Early Learning and Development Standards for Language and Literacy. Learning experiences will be intentionally planned that support children to:

Understand language

- Word comprehension
- Language comprehension
- Vocabulary
- Expression of ideas, feelings, and needs
- Language structure

Use language for social interaction

- Conventions of conversation
- Language for interaction

Gain book appreciation and knowledge

- Interest and engagement with books

- Understanding stories or information, may be shared through oral storytelling, sharing of pictures and/or books

Gain knowledge of print and its uses

- Book concepts
- Print concepts
- Letter recognition

Develop phonological awareness

- Phonological awareness

Convey meaning through drawing, letters, and words

- Drawing and writing

Teachers will access the CT ELDS for specific guidance on age appropriate indicators across each learning progression.

Early language and literacy will be taught and observed:

- Through oral language opportunities such as group meetings/circle time: discussion, sharing, finger plays, chants, and rhymes
- Over snack and lunch - conversation
- During planned small group activities
- In the library area of the classroom – individual/shared reading
- In the writing center of the classroom
- Through activities and provocations that provide opportunities for children to write such as scientific observation, journals, graphing and charting of ideas,
- Through dramatic play and block building when books and writing materials are included in those centers
- Labeling of children’s spaces and belongings, as well as functional labeling in the classroom
- By providing alphabet charts in the writing area
- By providing small group and child-initiated activities using games, puzzles, and manipulatives that teach rhyming, alphabet, and initial sounds
- Through opportunities where children write their names in natural contexts such as signing in, labeling their art work, sign-ups to wait a turn
- In planned group story – clear objectives that include literacy skills and interactions across Bloom’s taxonomy
- Through multiple readings of a book over time
- During activities that include dramatizing stories – role play, flannel boards, puppets
- Through routines: job charts, lining up activities, using signage in the classroom
- Through provocations and project work

Language and Literacy development will be assessed by observation of related learning indicators and:

Preschool Assessment Framework: Cognitive Domain

8. Uses complex sentences and vocabulary to describe ideas and experiences
9. Understands and participates in conversations

10. Shows understanding of stories
11. Displays knowledge of books in print
12. Recognizes similar sounds in speech
13. Identifies printed words
14. Uses writing to convey meaning

Early literacy experiences are essential to later school success. Experiences with listening, speaking, reading, and writing should be embedded into group, play, and content related activities. General literacy concepts that should be included are:

1. Oral language development (expressive and receptive)
  - Vocabulary skill building for all children, including dual language learners
2. Alphabetic code
  - Alphabet knowledge
  - Phonological and phonemic awareness
  - Emergent writing (in centers, journal, specific writing center)
3. Print knowledge
  - Environmental print
  - Concepts of print
4. Opportunities for varied reading experiences
  - Fiction, non-fiction, and story opportunities
  - Shared reading (big books and multiple copy books)
  - Dialogic reading
 

In dialogic reading, the adult helps the child become the teller of the story. The adult becomes the listener, the questioner, the audience for the child. Children learn most from books when they are actively involved.

Instruction in language and literacy skills will take place in a variety of settings across the daily schedule.

Oral language will take place at group meetings, story read-aloud, snack and lunch, and through spontaneous and planned conversation over play activities. Teachers will initiate, support, and extend conversation with children and between children at every opportunity. Teachers will model vocabulary and language structures by using correct modeling through narration and labeling. Questions that support higher order thinking and greater verbalization such as how, why, tell me about, and what if will be emphasized over simple recall questions. Corrections to speech and language errors will be made only by restating the utterance with a correct model.

Alphabetic code, including phonological awareness, is taught through a holistic approach in meaningful context such as stories, shared reading activities, journaling, and the inclusion of writing into all play areas. Music and movement, puzzles, and games will also be used to teach alphabet and sound skills. Teachers will plan activities for the writing center that include work with letters (templates, stamps, magnetic letters) and letter writing (post office, office, writing and sending cards). Teachers will point out letters and their sounds in the environment.



Providing an environment that is rich with materials that have the potential for teaching literacy skills will reinforce print knowledge. Books will be displayed with related materials in all areas of the classroom. Writing materials will be provided in blocks, dramatic play, and other areas where children can use writing in play. Functional labels will be used on doorways, shelves, and other areas where they help to direct and inform children.

Opportunities for shared reading and read-aloud will take place daily. Multiple readings will be utilized at least monthly. Children will be read to spontaneously and individually when possible. Work with books will include big books and multiple copies of books used in small group activities. Children will have exposure to both fiction and non-fiction books with emphasis on high quality children's literature.

### **An Example Procedure for Reading to Children**

1. Introduce and point to the title, author, and illustrator of the book. Review what authors and illustrators do.
2. Show the cover and ask children to predict what they think the book might be about.
3. Engage children by using voice inflection, expression, and drama where appropriate.
4. Call attention to interesting words and their sounds and point them out on the page.
5. At an appropriate place, ask a **predictive** or **comparative** question. Repeat child answers, rephrasing if necessary.
6. At the end of the story ask several **recall** questions – ask for *volunteer* answers. Repeat answers back to children. Re-ask to reinforce.
7. Conclude with an **open-ended** question such as “Why do you think...” or “How would you...” and compare different children's answers.
8. Leave the book with props in the library or other related area of the classroom.

The practice of multiple readings of high quality children's books is required monthly. This is a highly effective strategy for teaching early literacy skills. High quality children's books are defined as those that:

- Inspire imagination and wonder
- Are worthy of repetition
- Are child-like without being childish
- Have illustrations that have aesthetic value & artistic originality
- Have a story line that is relevant to children's lives and emotions

When selecting a book for the lesson plan, “fitting the theme” is set aside for books that have high literary value – in other words, considered to be high quality and can be used to support a comprehensive literacy plan. Books that fit the theme, including non-fiction, can be used in other ways, displayed throughout related areas of the classroom, used for research, and included in the library area. It can happen that a book is *both* high quality and fits a unit of study.

### **Example Procedure for Multiple Readings**

Pre-reading: Picture walk-through for familiarity and speculation

Reading	Goal	Strategies and Activities
First Reading	Familiarity Enjoyment Wondering	Introduce the title, author, illustrator. “Wonder” what the book is about based on the cover. Ask children what they think the book is about. “Wonder” what might happen next to focus attention, but don’t ask question during the reading Ask children what they liked best about the book. Write it on a chart.
Second Reading	Recall Clarifying Predicting	Ask who remembers the title of the book. Ask who the characters in the book are. Ask who can tell what the book is about. At key points in the book, ask what happens next. At the end, ask children to share something they remember from the book. Write it on a chart to share.
Third Reading	Understanding	Ask “why” questions at key points of the story. Ask if children have ever had a similar experience and to tell about it. Small group: Have children draw something they remember from the story and dictate their ideas. They can tell about their drawing and what they remember to other children in the group.
Fourth Reading	Analyzing Creating Sequencing	Ask children what happened first in the book, then what, etc. and then to explain how the story ended. Ask children to recall the characters in the book. Ask children to recall what they saw in the pictures – what did the characters wear, eat, do, say? What objects did they notice in the book? Act out the story using sound effects, props, and/or costumes. (Any number of children can be any character)
Fifth Reading	Skill building	Use the book to teach skills and concepts that might be embedded. For example, are there opportunities to find shapes, count objects, call attention to spatial relationships, etc.? If a big book or multiple copies of books are available, use them to find letters and words, call attention to words that begin or end with the same sound, or rhyme. Find capital letters and periods that begin and end sentences. Reinforce front to back, left to right book knowledge. Ask children to write a word from the book. Call attention to an unfamiliar word – define it, write it, and have children talk about it or draw something about it.

## Journaling with Young Children

A journal is a personal collection of writings about one’s thoughts and ideas. It is a creative process by which an individual responds to events and experiences on paper. With young children, it may include drawing, approximated spelling, scribble writing, tracing, or dictations that are used to convey their own ideas. A journal is not a place to practice letter formation, penmanship, copying, or rote exercises.

Journals can take many forms such as 3 ring notebooks (reusable) or pocket folders with center clasps. They should be no smaller than 8.5 x 11” paper as children need room to write and draw. Lined paper of any kind is not appropriate for preschool children. A variety of writing tools should be available such as markers, pencils, colored pencils, and pens.

Journaling is usually done with small groups of children at a table, though it can travel to anywhere in the room where children may be inspired to write and have the space and tools to do so. Journaling can be a planned activity or spontaneous. Both can be overdone and burdensome, losing their appeal if done too frequently, without enough support, or at a level beyond what the child can do comfortably. Once every week or two is a good place to start.

Journaling activities have three phases:

**1. Inspiration (pre-writing prompt)**

- A story, song, poem, or artwork that might be open-ended or invites imagination
- An event such as a field trip, classroom visitor, performance, or holiday
- A construction or drawing/painting by the child
- An experience of the child such as a new sibling, moving, losing a tooth, etc.
- A wish or hope
- A question

**2. Expression (writing)**

- The thought process – oral to written language
- The mechanical process – symbols, mechanics, and motor skills

**3. Sharing (reading and clarifying)**

- The child explains his written ideas orally by sharing it with others
- The child answers questions about his ideas
- Writing becomes part of a larger collection (display, class book, bound over time - showing progression)



**Developmental Sequence of Writing**

1. Scribbling while talking
2. One letter spelling- *M for Mom*
3. Grouping consonants – *trz for trees*
4. Addition of vowels - usually long vowels first

Two or three word phrases can occur with any level

*Adults support developmental spelling when they:*

- Accept effort and approximations and don't attempt to correct
- Talk about what children have written
- Ask children to read their writing before they try to interpret it
- Providing the correct spelling *when asked*

**Domain M: Mathematics**

This curriculum reflects the CT Early Learning and Development Standards for Mathematics. Learning experiences will be intentionally planned that support children to develop:

Understand counting and cardinality

- Number names
- Cardinality
- Written numerals
- Recognition of quantity
- Comparison

Understand and describe relationships to solve problems (operations and algebraic thinking)

- Number operations

Understand the attributes and relative properties of objects (measurement and data)

- Data
- Sorting and Classifying

Understand shapes and spatial relationships (geometry and spatial sense)

- Spatial relationships
- Identification of shapes
- Composition of shapes

Teachers will access the CT ELDS for specific guidance on age appropriate indicators across each learning progression.

Mathematics will be taught and observed:

- Through planned small group activities
- In the math and manipulatives center – provocations, materials, and games that can be used for sorting, patterning, counting, and comparing
- By integrating mathematical concepts into music, gross motor games, science, cooking, and social studies
- Using books and stories based on mathematical concepts
- Collecting data for graphing and charting to represent mathematical ideas
- Through routines: transitions, lining up, snack, hand washing, etc.
- By labeling and using signage in the classroom
- Labeling snack serving amounts – “menus”
- Within dramatic play and blocks – adding materials that include numbers and encourage counting, measuring, sorting, and patterning
- Through observation in nature and science – natural patterns
- By providing opportunities for investigation where concepts such as counting, sorting, classifying, patterning, and shape are used
- Block play
- Provocations and project work

Mathematical learning will be assessed by observation of related learning indicators and:

Preschool Assessment Framework: Cognitive Domain

1. Engages in scientific inquiry
3. Sorts objects
4. Recognizes and makes patterns
5. Compares and orders objects and events
6. Relates number to quantity
7. Demonstrates spatial awareness

Experiences in Math and Science are offered across the day in small and large groups, but most importantly through provocations within the classroom math and science learning centers. Math and science concepts are also applied and practiced as they relate to content and project work, field trips, music, movement, and outdoor play. According to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, early childhood math experiences focus on six elements in early childhood:

Number & Operations – relating quantity to number, grouping  
Algebra – sorting and patterning  
Geometry – sorting, patterning, spatial relationships, 2 and 3 dimensional shapes  
Measurement – comparing/ordering, using standard and non-standard measures  
Data Analysis & Probability – engaging in scientific inquiry, sorting, predicting  
Process – engaging in scientific inquiry, problem solving, describing/recording ideas

Mathematical concepts are taught by intentionally embedding them into hands-on experiences such as work with manipulatives, cooking, games, puzzles, books, the sensory table, blocks, field trips, gross motor activities, and dramatic play. Numbers will be evident in the environment and used in natural, authentic contexts. Work with numbers will be part of daily routines such as lining up, counting out a portion of snack, counting the seconds needed to wash hands, etc. Activities where children will use graphs and charts to represent mathematical ideas such as quantifying, grouping, classifying, and comparison will be used frequently.

Mathematical concepts are utilized in authentic contexts through project work, and can be intentionally taught through provocations and proposals where they are embedded in attractive activities that include investigation, problem solving, and representation.



## **Domain S: Science**

This curriculum reflects the CT Early Learning and Development Standards for Science. Learning experiences will be intentionally planned that support children to:

Apply scientific practices

- Questioning and solving problems
- Investigating
- Using evidence

Engage in the process of engineering

- Design cycle

Understand patterns, process, and relationships of living things

- Unity and diversity of life
- Living things and their interactions with the environment and each other

Understand physical science

- Energy, force, and motion
- Matter and its properties

Understand features of earth

- Earth's features and the effects of weather and water
- Earth and human activity

Teachers will access the CT ELDS for specific guidance on age appropriate indicators across each learning progression.

This will be taught and observed by:

- Providing a science center in the classroom
- Planning small group science activities – experiments, observations
- Recording/drawing observed changes over time
- Providing provocations with materials for children to experiment and test: float and sink, freeze and melt, magnetic properties
- Caring for a class pet
- Taking nature walks, field trips to farms, zoos, and nature centers
- Adding materials to blocks and water table that provide experience with motion, force, and energy
- Studying topics such as animals, insects, plants, rocks, shells, trees, and other scientific or natural objects or phenomenon, recycling, environment care, as well as natural processes and those created by humans
- Block play
- Provocations and project work

Scientific learning will be assessed by observation of related learning indicators and:

Preschool Assessment Framework: Cognitive Domain

1. Engages in scientific inquiry
2. Uses a variety of strategies to solve problems

Science topics are excellent choices for long-term study and projects . Exploration of science topics takes place in large and small groups as well as through activities and displays in the classroom science center. Topics will fall within six larger concept areas:

1. Design and engineering
2. Living things and their interaction with environment
3. Energy, force, and motion
4. Matter and its properties
5. Earth features, weather, and water
6. Effects of human activity

Science studies will follow the KWL model of learning. At the introduction of the topic, the teacher will find out what children already know about the subject and record it on a web or chart. What the children wonder about will be identified through their misunderstandings and questions as the unit of study progresses. These questions will create the framework and focus for planning unit or project activities. At the conclusion of the study, what the children have learned will be summarized by revisiting work samples, sharing ideas, and reviewing the original charts of what was first known and wondered about and comparing them with what is

now known. Display space in the classroom will be dedicated to the topics studied. Time frames for study will be open-ended.

Although the National Academy of Sciences does not specify preschool level standards, they have recommendations that are applicable to science taught at any level, most importantly it is necessary for teachers to:

- Focus and support inquiries while interacting with students.
- Orchestrate discourse among students about scientific ideas.
- Challenge students to accept and share responsibility for their own learning.
- Recognize and respond to student diversity and encourage all students to participate fully in science learning.
- Encourage and model the skills of scientific inquiry, as well as the curiosity, openness to new ideas and data, and skepticism that characterize science.



## **Domain SE: Social and Emotional Development**

This curriculum reflects the CT Early Learning and Development Standards for Social and Emotional Development. Learning experiences and behavior management techniques will be intentionally planned that support children to develop:

Trusting, healthy attachments and relationships with primary caregivers

- Trusting relationship
- Managing separation

Self-regulation

- Regulation of emotions and behavior
- Regulation of impulses and behavior

Express, recognize, and respond to emotions

- Emotional expression
- Recognition and response to emotions in others

Self-awareness, self-concept, and competence

- Sense of self
- Personal preferences
- Self-concept and competency

Social relationships

- Adult relationships
- Play/friendship
- Conflict resolution

Teachers will access the CT ELDS for specific guidance on age appropriate indicators across each learning progression.

This is taught and observed:

- Within child-adult relationships – adults building relationship with children
- Through responsiveness of adults to children's social/emotional needs
- By giving opportunities for self-selected play and playmates
- During activities that provide opportunities for learning about emotions and pro-social behavior
- By establishing core behavior expectations in the classroom with consistent reinforcement
- By facilitation of strategies for conflict resolution
- By providing places and materials for regulating behavior in the environment
- Through activities that provide opportunities for self-awareness and identity
- Through activities that provide opportunities for partnership and collaboration between children

Social/Emotional Learning will be assessed by:

Preschool Assessment Framework: Personal/Social Domain

1. Shows self direction with a range of materials
2. Sustains attention to task/goal that child sets out to accomplish
3. Participates in teacher-led group activities
4. Manages transitions, follows routines, and rules
5. Uses words to express emotions or feelings
6. Shows empathy and caring for others
7. Interacts cooperatively with peers
8. Works to resolve conflicts
9. Recognizes similarities and appreciates differences

## **Behavior Management**



Social and emotional learning includes the development of self-control and resilience. Toddlertime uses Positive Behavior Supports as guidance and management of behavior. Positive Behavior Support Procedures are grounded in the idea that it is the adult who must modify their approach to child behavior management if the child is to change. All classrooms post and use three core behavioral expectations as the foundation for all acknowledgement, redirection, guidance, and discipline. They will also be shared with families so a universal language around behavior develops.

Be safe – we take care of ourselves

Be kind – we take care of others

Be responsible – we take care of things, we follow directions

We at all times speak respectfully to children and strive to keep a peaceful environment that is conducive to communication and comfort. We use a universal “stop-look-listen” signal for every transition and when teachers need to address children in a group. Children are always addressed by name or as “children,” not as friends or by labels of endearment.

Corrections to child behavior are made incrementally: using first proximity, then eye contact, and finally if necessary a private directive. At no time are children reprimanded in front of peers.

Conflicts are resolved through facilitation so that children learn to resolve their own conflicts through negotiation. Teachers, rather than solving the conflict themselves, will prompt children through a process that includes stating the problem, thinking of options for solutions, deciding on the best solution, and following through to resolve the issue.

Natural and logical consequences may be used when children do not respond to redirection and prompting to make a more responsible choice. Individual strategies to meet particular behavioral needs are developed when necessary, following an evaluation and logging of the behavior of concern to identify the possible triggers, communicative value, and function of the behavior. Replacement behaviors will be taught and an individual behavior management plan will be developed for the child. Referral to support services will be offered to families. At no time will behavior modification such as token systems and sticker charts be used without specific directives from a licensed practitioner. Individual behavior management planning will be on a case-by-case basis and will include a behavior specialist. Teachers will be expected to fully implement any individual behavior plans.

Additionally, we support the development of emotional intelligence by helping children to recognize, express, and manage their feelings constructively. Woven throughout our curriculum at Toddlertime are the experiences and interactions that allow children to become aware of their own emotions and those of others. Toddlertime supports the development of social/emotional intelligence - ways in which they affect their environment and others, friendship, responsibility, authority, fairness, and emotions/feelings. Our goal is that children develop personal characteristics that are valued throughout a lifetime such as perseverance, critical thinking, effective communication, risk-taking, integrity, and collaboration. Activities will be planned that meet these goals and listed on lesson plans.

Research shows that a child’s brain is most malleable within the first 3 to 5 years of life. When they are taught social and emotional skills at this time, it provides the opportunity for children's executive functions to develop. Executive functions include attending, concentration, memory, impulse control, reasoning, and judgment – those skills that are critical to one's success not just academically but also personally and interpersonally.

Teachers are expected to be, at all times, responsive to the social and emotional needs of children – offering comfort and security as needed to help children separate and adjust to life outside of the family. Transition into school will be handled gradually and gently where necessary, with respect to the needs and feelings of parents, while following the school policies and guidelines.



## **Domain SS: Social Studies**

This curriculum reflects the CT Early Learning and Development Standards for Social Studies. Learning experiences will be intentionally planned that support children to:

Understand self, family, and a diverse community

- Individual development and identity
- Culture

Learn about people and the environment

- Power, authority and governance
- People, places, and environments
- Civic deals and practices

Develop an understanding of economic systems and resources

- Individuals, groups, and institutions
- Production, distribution, and consumption
- Science, technology, and society

Teachers will access the CT ELDS for specific guidance on age appropriate indicators across each learning progression.

This is taught and observed through:

- Activities and materials that represent the cultures present in the class as well as the community as a whole – photographs, books, and objects
- Practices of inclusion
- Respectful communication between adults as well as adults and children
- Sharing in classroom responsibility – clean up, job charts
- Building classroom community – establishing and reinforcing core behavior expectations
- Dramatic play provocations – grocery store, restaurant, hospital, store, bank, post office, etc.
- Cooking activities – unfamiliar foods, ethnic foods
- Books – stories about people who live in familiar and unfamiliar places
- Multicultural music – folk songs and dances, instruments, movement activities
- Multicultural art experiences – appreciation, techniques, materials
- Artist and author studies
- Self-identification activities – journals, family posters
- Topic studies about occupations, recycling, places of business

Social Studies learning will be assessed by observation of related learning indicators and:

Preschool Assessment Framework: Personal/Social Domain

10. Recognizes similarities and appreciates differences

Preschool Assessment Framework: Creative Domain

3. Represents experiences and fantasies in pretend play

Children experience social learning through both play opportunities and selected topics for study. Dramatic play, blocks, and sensory activities provide children with opportunities for social engagement with peers and teachers, and varied group experiences help children learn cooperation, attention, rules, and routines. Taking responsibility in the classroom teaches children to care for themselves and function as a member of a group.

Children are supported in their exploration of social roles in the family and community through play. Varied materials are provided so children can build their own understandings of family, community, gender, and culture. The social studies curriculum includes the study of people and places that are relevant to children's lives; family, community, professions, and cultures and at the same time discourage stereotyping. Children will engage in activities that form the foundational understanding of economic concepts such as playing restaurant, store, and exchange of money. They experience roles such as police, firefighter, doctor, nurse, teacher, etc. They will also explore the physical characteristics of their community as a gateway to geography.

*“Continuous effort - not strength or intelligence - is the key to unlocking our potential.”*

*~ Winston Churchill*

### **Cognitive Curriculum - Technology**

A laptop and iPad are available for teachers to use in the classroom if needed to enhance a topic of study. Cameras, use of recording equipment, and CD players are also a regular experience for children. These will not be used for entertainment but for educational purposes or investigation. Use by children will be carefully planned and purposeful with adult support.

## **Domain CA: Creative Arts**

This curriculum reflects the CT Early Learning and Development Standards for Creative Arts. Learning experiences will be intentionally planned that support children to:

Engage in and enjoy the arts

- Music
- Visual arts
- Drama
- Dance

Explore and respond to creative works

- Appreciation of the arts

Teachers will access the CT ELDS for specific guidance on age appropriate indicators across each learning progression.

This is taught and observed through:

- Child initiated exploration within the classroom art center, music center, and dramatic play center
- Teacher directed group activities in music and dance based on fundamental music concepts
- Display of works of art in the classroom
- Playing a variety of complex music for movement and dance, nap time, and using with drawing or painting
- Artist or composer studies
- Planned art lessons - teaching art skills and concepts such as observational drawing, still life, use of tools
- Using art vocabulary when communicating with children: form, color, perspective, space, line, direction, shape, texture, composition
- Using music vocabulary when communicating with children: rhythm, tempo, dynamics, pitch, melody, style, timbre
- Activities where children describe and compare works of art
- Field trips to museums and performances
- Dramatization of stories: role play, puppets, masks, flannel board figures

Creative Arts learning will be assessed by observation of related learning indicators and:  
Preschool Assessment Framework: Creative Domain

1. Builds and constructs to represent own ideas
2. Draws and paints to represent own ideas
3. Represents experiences and fantasies in pretend play
4. Sings and responds to music

## **Visual Arts**

The National Art Education Association influences the Toddlertime art curriculum. Art experiences will include drawing, painting, weaving, collage, sculpture, modeling, printing, and construction in two separate formats: free expression and art skills.

**Free Expression:** Art is experienced as a choice in the art area of the classroom where a selection of tools and materials are available daily for the purpose of exploration and free expression. This will include drawing, painting, collage, working with clay, cutting and pasting, and other construction/sculpture materials. An emphasis is on process and the development of creativity, so children will not be asked to copy patterns or produce a pre-conceived product.

**Art Skills:** Art is also experienced through instruction by offering a authentic art experience at least once weekly that will focus on the use of tools and techniques. Sketching/drawing, and

painting of objects – facilitating observation from various perspectives, use of collage materials for self-portraits, sculpting from clay, print-making, paper making, weaving with natural materials, puppet and mask making using complex materials and processes, in addition to learning the techniques of professional artists and illustrators are all examples of teaching art skills at a meaningful and authentic level. This art instruction focuses on techniques such as perspective, use of authentic tools and media, as well as aesthetic display of children’s work. Such art work may extend over many days and should be revisited so that children’s skill levels increase over time.

Art is seen as an expression of emotion and thought so uniqueness is supported. Fundamental art concepts such as color, line, shape, balance, shape, texture, mass, volume, and pattern are pointed out to children. Children have the opportunity to appreciate, study, and respond to the work of professional artists through artist studies and use of reproduction prints.

The National Art Education Association standards that influence our art curriculum include:

- Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- Knowing the differences between materials, techniques, and processes
- Describing how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses
- Using different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
- Using art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner
- Knowing the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas
- Using visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas
- Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
- Selecting and using subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning
- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- Knowing that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures
- Identifying specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places
- Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
- Understanding there are various purposes for creating works of visual art
- Describing how people’s experiences influence the development of specific artworks
- Understanding there are different responses to specific artworks

## **Music and Dance**

The National Association for Music Education specifies content and achievement standards as well as best practices at the prekindergarten level. Children will regularly engage in a variety of music activities across the following four content areas:

1. *Singing and playing instruments:* Children will
  - a. use their voices expressively as they speak, chant, and sing
  - b. sing a variety of simple songs in various keys, meters, and genres, alone and with a group, becoming increasingly accurate in rhythm and pitch
  - c. experiment with a variety of instruments and other sound sources
  - d. play simple melodies and accompaniments on instruments

*2. Creating music:* Children will

- a. improvise songs to accompany their play activities
- b. improvise instrumental accompaniments to songs, recorded selections, stories, and poems
- c. create short pieces of music, using voices, instruments, and other sound sources
- d. invent and use original graphic or symbolic systems to represent vocal and instrumental sounds and musical ideas

*3. Responding to music:* Children will

- a. identify the sources of a wide variety of sounds
- b. respond through movement to music of various tempos, meters, dynamics, modes, genres, and styles to express what they hear and feel in works of music
- c. participate freely in music activities

*4. Understanding music:* Children will

- a. use their own vocabulary and standard music vocabulary to describe voices, instruments, music notation, and music of various genres, styles, and periods from diverse cultures
- b. sing, play instruments, move, or verbalize to demonstrate awareness of the elements of music and changes in their usage
- c. demonstrate an awareness of music as a part of daily life

Music and movement are taught daily in the classroom by the regular classroom teacher in addition to weekly by a music specialist. Teachers are expected to extend the lessons of the music specialist into daily music experiences. There will be a music area available for free exploration in the classroom with a CD player, CDs, books about music, instruments, and other music materials. Group music lessons are planned and taught daily and consist of 2 experiences; movement to music, singing, and/or use of instruments. All musical experiences are designed to strengthen understanding of the fundamental music concepts of rhythm, tempo, dynamics, pitch, melody, style, and timbre.

Singing includes a variety of genres, humorous songs, folksongs, chants, finger plays, and songs that teach skills such as counting, rhyming, spatial relationships, and science concepts. Movement includes both creative movement and imitative movement to music of different composers and genres. It is not appropriate for children to sing along with CDs – songs will be taught by the teacher. Recordings that have games or movement activities with instruction set to music are not considered music education, but rather language and/or gross motor.

## **Domain PH: Physical Development and Health**

This curriculum reflects the CT Early Learning and Development Standards for Physical Development and Health. Learning experiences will be intentionally planned that support children to:

Develop gross motor skills

- Mobility
- Large muscle movement and coordination

Develop fine motor skills

- Visual motor integration
- Small muscle movement and coordination

#### Acquire adaptive skills

- Feeding routines and nutrition
- Safety and responsibility
- Dressing and hygiene

#### Maintain physical health and well-being

- Physical activity
- Healthy behaviors

Teachers will access the CT ELDS for specific guidance on age appropriate indicators across each learning progression.

#### This is taught and observed:

- During teacher-directed gross motor games and activities
- During teacher-directed movement to music activities
- Within child initiated gross motor activities using indoor and outdoor equipment
- Within teacher-directed fine motor games and activities
- During child initiated fine motor activities using tools and materials in art, woodworking, at the writing center, manipulatives, dramatic play and sensory table
- Within provocations that involve gross and fine motor activity
- Within opportunities and scaffolding for self-care: toileting, feeding, dressing routines
- Within activities and interactions around healthy food choices at snack and lunch
- By providing props for dramatic play that allow children to practice dressing, cooking, and cleaning tasks
- By providing opportunities for investigation and experiences with healthy choices and wellness, including learning about occupations and facilities related to health care

#### Physical Development and Health will be assessed by:

Preschool Assessment Framework: Physical Domain

1. Uses coordinated large-muscle movements
2. Uses coordinated small-muscle movements
3. Cares for self independently

Children are provided with opportunities for large and small muscle development daily, both indoors and outdoors, in both structured and unstructured activities. Daily routines, planned activities, as well as content activities support the following basic skills and concepts:

Gross Motor – action, effort, space, and body awareness through physical exercise

Fine Motor – grasp, manipulation of tools, strength, and control

Self-care – dressing, toileting, hand washing, eating independently, caring for belongings

Nutrition – selecting and eating nutritious foods, balancing the daily diet, food groups

Safety – self-protection and risk taking, safety rules in home, school, and community

There are four movement concepts outlined in *Active for Life ~ Developmentally Appropriate Movement Programs for Young Children*, NAEYC 2008. These concepts will be taught through daily movement activities across all areas of the curriculum.



<b>Space</b>	<b>Directions</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>Pathways</b>
self space shared space	up/down forward/backward right/left sideways clockwise counterclockwise	high middle low	straight curved zig-zag

## Action Awareness

## Effort Awareness

<b>Time</b>	<b>Force</b>	<b>Flow</b>
<b>Speed:</b> slow medium fast accelerating	<b>Degree:</b> strong medium light	<b>Dimensions:</b> single movements combinations of movements transitions between movements
<b>Rhythm:</b> beats cadence patterns	<b>Creating force:</b> start sustained explosive gradual	
	<b>Absorbing force:</b> stopping receiving stabilizing	

## Space Awareness

<b>Locomotor Skills</b>	<b>Stability Skills</b>	<b>Manipulative Skills</b>
walking running hopping skipping galloping sliding leaping climbing crawling chasing	turning twisting bending stopping rolling balancing transferring weight jumping and landing stretching curling swinging swaying dodging	throwing catching and collecting, kicking punting dribbling volleying striking with rackets striking with long- handled instruments

## Body Awareness

The National Association for Sport and Physical Activity specifies the following preschool guidelines for physical activity daily, which will be followed *with times adjusted for a part day program*. Parents are responsible for meeting some portion of these guidelines.

1. Preschoolers should accumulate at least 60 minutes daily of structured physical activity
2. Preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of daily, unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.
3. Preschoolers should develop competence in movement skills that are building blocks for more

By Myself	With Other Movers and Objects	
<b>Body Parts:</b> head, neck, ears, eyes, nose, shoulder, knee, heel, arms, waist, chest, stomach, hips, leg, bottom, foot, spine, back , elbow, wrist, hand, fingers, ankle, toes big/small curved/straight wide/narrow twisted like/unlike	<b>Locations:</b> near to/far from over/under in front/behind facing/side-by-side	 on/off together/apart around/through
	<b>Roles:</b> leading/following mirroring unison/alternately solo/partner/group	

complex movement tasks.

4. Preschoolers should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities
5. Individuals responsible for the well-being of preschoolers should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child's movement skills.

## Physical Curriculum – Fine Motor

Fine motor skills will be taught through natural applications where skills that strengthen hand coordination and dexterity are embedded into activities that are developmentally appropriate and educationally rich. Children will learn to manipulate tools and refine their grasp and oppositional finger strength as they write, construct, and create art in meaningful contexts (for example: journaling, signing in, writing names on work, collage work), not through tasks simply designed for fine motor practice. The developmental sequence expected of children is as follows:

### Developing Grasp – Fine Motor



### **Palmar Grasp**

Children will generally use this grasp to reach out to objects when they begin to be interested in coloring. This is the first stage in developing pencil skills.



### **Digital Grasp**

A child will generally move from a palmar grasp to a digital one. This will develop as they gain more control with the crayon or pencil. Generally by the time the child is three they will be using this grasp.



### **Static Tripod Grip**

This grip usually follows the digital grasp. Control of the crayon or pencil will improve. Fingers appear stiff and are held close together as movement at this stage comes from the wrist. This grip has usually developed by age four. Some children may manage with this grip but may have difficulty later in school life and often suffer discomfort and fatigue when they need to write for long periods of time.



### **Dynamic Tripod Grip**

The picture shows one version of a dynamic grip. The grip works because the pencil is supported between the thumb and two fingers and movement comes from the fingers not the wrist. This is a functional mature grip. We aim for this as the hand is more relaxed allowing the child to cope better with the speed and quantity of writing that may be needed later in school life.

## **5. Approaches to Teaching & Learning**

Teachers are expected to support the development of character that we at Toddlertime value as a priority to learning and success in life – sometimes referred to in scholarly literature as “dispositions.” We define these as the ability for children to:

- **communicate** effectively
- **collaborate** with others

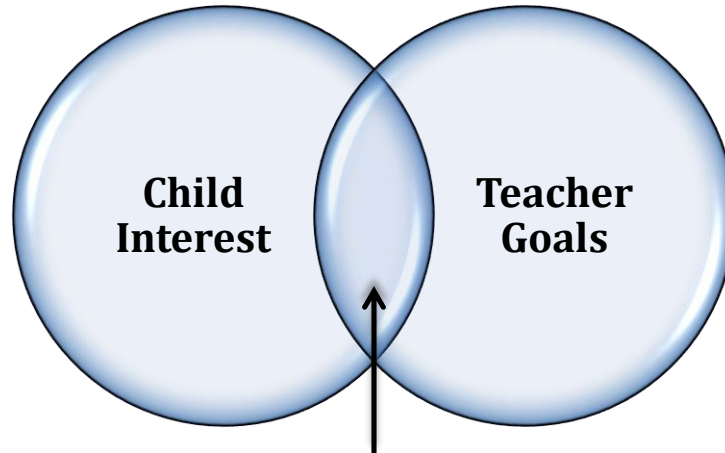
- use **critical thinking** to make decisions
- **engage** and **persevere** in problem solving
- **take risks** in order to learn from experience
- act with **self-control** and **integrity**
- adapt to change with **resilience**

While teachers are typically competent with planning learning activities around concrete skills and concepts, doing so within contexts that teach character development can be more challenging. Most of these character traits are learned in the absence of direct instruction and support, and emerge through opportunities for independent investigation where children are self-directed. Teachers must believe in the child as a capable protagonist of his own learning, be willing to reflect on the learning potential within every opportunity that children encounter, and be willing to take risks themselves in the design of novel and unconventional learning experiences for children. For many teachers this may mean a paradigm shift away from thinking about education where the teacher is a fountain of information and his/her duty is to fill the empty cups of the children. Instead, we are looking for teachers to be mediators, facilitators, and designers of opportunities that reflect the interests of children so they are provided them with a meaningful and intriguing context in which to learn what have been consistently identified as necessary skills and dispositions by researchers and scholars across the disciplines of human development, psychology, education, and business.

Child interest becomes a clear focus in the design of effective learning opportunities. The teacher and child have distinctly different motivations and agendas that must overlap if the child is going to learn. The teacher creates the recipe for learning, keeping in mind that the child is the intended consumer with his own particular tastes and preferences. Skills and concepts are embedded in authentic, meaningful contexts that integrate disciplines, are open-ended experiences, and lead toward critical thinking. Rote learning and practice tasks are kept to an absolute minimum. Learning experiences will encourage exploration, investigation, risk-taking, trial and error hypothesis testing, creative and innovative use of materials, use of real tools and media, and invention. Children will be supported to represent their learning in individual ways reflective of their talents and interests: drawing, writing, painting, constructing, singing,

<b>Galinsky</b>	The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs	Focus and control, perspective taking, communicating, making connections, critical thinking, taking on challenges, self-directed and engaged learning
<b>Tough</b>	How Children Succeed	Grit, curiosity, and risk-taking
<b>Werner, Bowlby</b>	Resiliency and Attachment Theory	Resilience, forming attachment, taking initiative, self-control
<b>Gerber</b>	Raising Capable Children	Curious, self-directed, resourceful, exploration
<b>Vygotsky</b>	Social Development Theory	Social connection, communication
<b>Piaget</b>	Cognitive Development Theory	Problem solving, exploration, critical thinking, constructivism
<b>Gardner</b>	Multiple Intelligence Theory	Linguistic, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, logical, natural
<b>Heifetz, Senge</b>	Organizational Effectiveness	Adaptability to change, decisive, collaboration, interpersonal communication, integrity
<b>Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills</b>	National Research on Children's Needs for Success	Technologically literate, critical and creative thinker, collaborative, takes initiative, adapts to change, integrates learning from different disciplines, self-directed and engaged, flexible

dancing, talking, photography, display, and other methods of expression.



It is where the child's interest and teacher's goals overlap that learning occurs and that a true assessment of ability can occur.

Teachers are expected to adjust their teaching strategies according to the situation and abilities of children so that they are using the least directive approach necessary to their success. Generally speaking, if children require no real direction, they may be working at mastery level without being stretched. If they require frequent direct supports, they may be working beyond what is appropriate. When teachers can move between the mediating strategies of facilitating, supporting, scaffolding, and co-constructing children will generally be working within their zone of proximal development, which is where there is greatest learning potential. This is represented by Bredekamp and Rosegrant along a continuum of teacher behaviors.

## The Continuum of Teaching Behaviors

Least Directive to Most Directive



Learning experiences are planned with individualization in mind. Children are assessed through interaction in natural play contexts, with adjustments to activities, materials, and supports made continually to ensure that the child is working within his zone of proximal development – challenged without being frustrated. Teachers circulate among children constantly, engaging them in meaningful conversation, answering questions, supplying materials based on the child's interest, posing problems to solve, and acknowledging success. Teachers create scaffolds to new skills and support children who are in need. They add and change materials in the classroom as children's abilities and interests dictate and are responsive to the behavioral/emotional needs of the children individually and in groups.

Teachers will also engage in project work because it is a method of teaching that supports the performance standards, integrated learning, and character-building goals we are targeting better than any other approach. It consistently intersects child interest with teacher's goals creating the greatest potential for in-depth, meaningful learning and cognitive change.

*The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn...and change.*

*~ Carl Rogers*

## **6. Teacher Interaction**

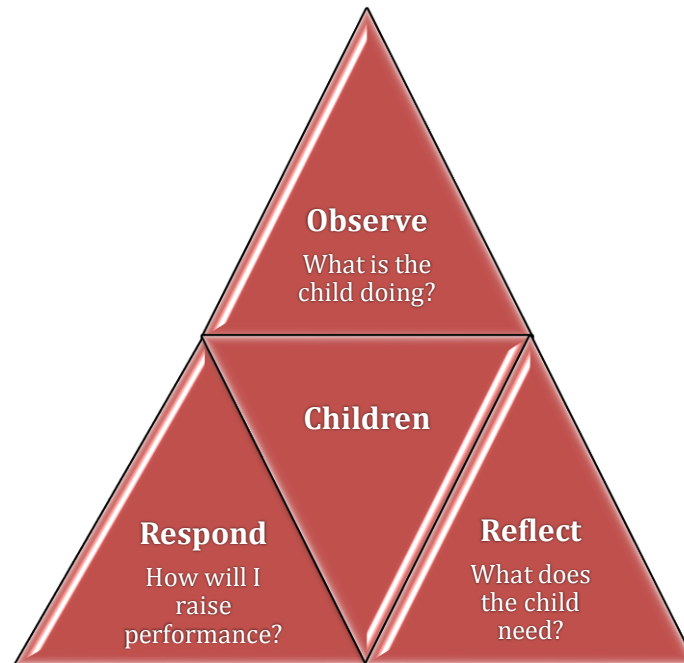
---

### **Individualizing Instruction through Interaction**

The goal of teacher interaction is to support the child at their level of development and ability along Bredekamp and Rosegrant's Learning Framework and facilitate higher order thinking (Bloom's Taxonomy). The teacher must use guidance techniques to allow children to make incremental steps toward higher level thinking while focusing work in their zone of proximal development.

Learning does not occur separately from social context. The discourse between teachers and children is where realization occurs for both. The teacher's most fundamental role is to observe children's behavior, reflect on its meaning, and to respond in a way that meets the child's need and raises their level of performance. This is called the Teaching Triangle (Reinhardt, 2011).

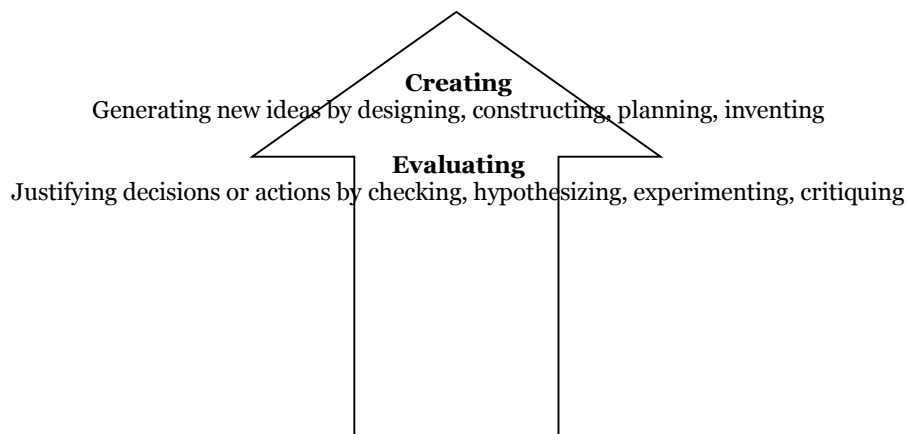
### The Early Childhood Teaching Triangle



The Early Childhood Teaching Triangle provides a framework of practice to assist teachers in thinking about and making choices about their instructional actions and roles in supporting children's learning. Excellent teachers don't manage children; they manage learning. They are outcomes-focused.

### Facilitating Higher Order Thinking

Higher order thinking supports our goals of children becoming capable problem-solvers, decision-makers, and risk-takers. Blooms Revised Taxonomy is a framework for understanding and designing interactions at all levels of thought. It represents a hierarchy of cognitive complexity.



### **Analyzing**

Breaking information into parts to explore understanding and relationships by comparing, organizing, deconstructing, interrogating

### **Applying**

Using information in another familiar situation by implementing, carrying out, using, executing

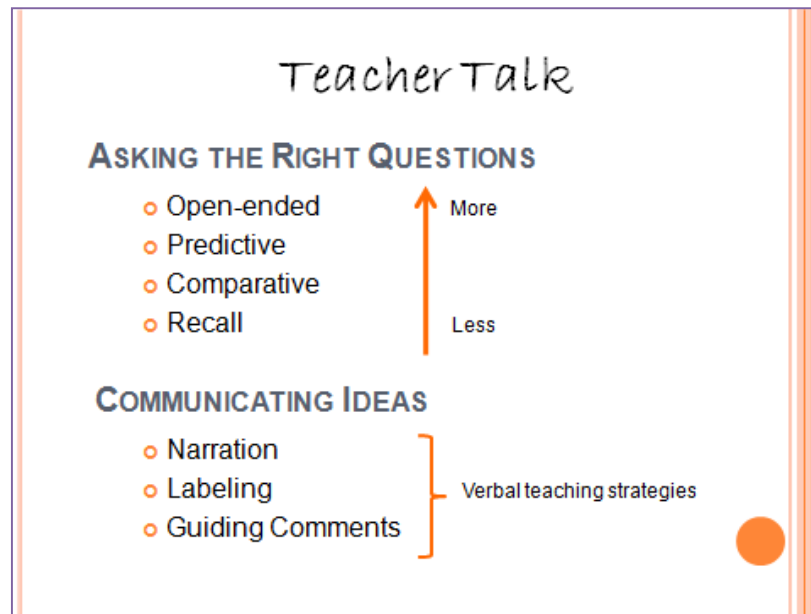
### **Understanding**

Explaining ideas or concepts by interpreting, summarizing, paraphrasing, classifying, explaining

### **Remembering**

Recalling information by recognizing, listing, describing, retrieving, naming, finding

The goal is to engage children in higher order thinking as often as possible. It should be understood that any activity or process that involves the higher order thinking automatically includes lower processes. Cognitive processes are guided by “teacher talk.”



Above all, the discourse between teachers and children will be respectful and supportive. In response to challenging behavior, communication will be both kind and firm, but never harsh, demeaning, or confrontational. We believe that the development of character rests on the impressions and relationships formed in early childhood as well as the expectations and beliefs we hold about each child. We teach by example. If we wish for children to develop specific dispositions, we must exemplify and illuminate in our day-to-day actions:

- Effective communication
- Collaboration with others
- Use of critical thinking to make decisions
- Engagement and perseverance in problem solving
- Risk taking in order to learn from experience



- Self-control and integrity
- Adaptation to change with resilience

***“Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them.”***

*~ Lady Bird Johnson*

# 7. Assessment

---

Assessment of child progress utilizes the CT Preschool Assessment Framework and includes 30 performance standards across 4 domains of development, which articulate with the public school kindergarten inventory. Observation and documentation is done daily in natural contexts and entered into child records. From this evidence, child and class profiles are created three times per year (November, March, and June) and coincide with parent conferences in November and March where they are shared. The June profile will be sent home.

Performance Standards	
PS 1	Shows self direction with range of materials
PS 2	Sustains attention to task set out to accomplish
PS 3	Participates in teacher-led group activities
PS 4	Manages transitions, follows routines and rules
PS 5	Uses words to express emotions or feelings
PS 6	Shows empathy and caring for others
PS 7	Interacts cooperatively with peers
PS 8	Works to resolve conflicts
PS 9	Recognizes similarities and appreciates differences
PHY 1	Uses coordinated large muscle movements
PHY 2	Uses coordinated small muscle movements
PHY 3	Cares for self independently
COG 1	Engages in scientific inquiry
COG 2	Uses a variety of strategies to solve problems
COG 3	Sort objects
COG 4	Recognizes and makes patterns
COG 5	Compares and orders objects and events
COG 6	Relates number to quantity
COG 7	Demonstrates spatial awareness
COG 8	Uses complex sentences and vocabulary to describe
COG 9	Understands and participates in conversations
COG 10	Shows understanding of stories
COG 11	Displays knowledge of books and print
COG 12	Recognizes similar sounds in speech
COG 13	Identifies printed words
COG 14	Uses writing to convey meaning
CRE 1	Builds and constructs to represent own ideas
CRE 2	Draws and paints to represent own ideas
CRE 3	Represents experiences and fantasies in pretend play
CRE 4	Sings and responds to music

Assessment is used to adjust teaching strategies to meet individual needs and data collected over time may help to identify the need for evaluation and support services – all part of Connecticut’s Scientifically Research Based Instruction system – SRBI.

The assessment process is evidence based and will include the systematic collection of anecdotal notes, work samples, checklists, photographs, language samples, journals, logs, and/or dictations. This evidence is reviewed and benchmarked using the criteria in the CT Preschool Assessment Framework.

Assessment is based on observation over time. It is conducted in natural, authentic settings as children are engaged in regular activities and play – it is not “perform on demand.” Assessment will include multiple observations across several settings, with multiple informants. Teachers will organize their collected data and enter it into child and class profiles at several points during the year for sharing with parents and as part of the child’s permanent record of progress.

Documentation of child work will be taken at or close to the time of observation and interaction – not made from memory hours or days later. Documentation can be benchmarked at a later time and will use the following indicators:

**Mastery (M)** – behavior that is done independently and consistently across time and settings

**Emerging (E)** – behavior that is present with adult support or is seen inconsistently

**Not Yet Observed (N)** – can be due to absence, level of development, or classroom schedule and planning circumstances.

Teachers are to establish a system and schedule for observation and documentation that focuses on three performance standards per week; one must be cognitive. Two or three pieces of evidence should be collected across two or three settings during the week. Teachers will keep documentation materials and assessment plans accessible and use them consistently where indicated on the learning experience plans. Only facts will be recorded – what is seen and heard rather than opinions or assumptions. All evidence and assessments are considered confidential and are not to be shared with anyone without written parental permission.

### **Summary of assessment requirements:**

3 performance standards per week for assessment

3 different domains – one must be cognitive

3 activities or routines for each standard

3 pieces of evidence are needed for mastery

Each standard at least 3 times per year

Child and class profiles 3 times per year

### **How assessment will be used:**

- To monitor the progress of children in meeting performance standards
- To inform parents of child progress
- To contribute to the decision-making process regarding child placement and services
- To inform instruction and determine adjustments to teaching practice for individuals and groups

Assessment information is also gathered through documentation of the learning process that happens across the life of a project. Children's work samples, dispositions, language, and investigations are analyzed for insight into their individual learning pathways and interests. They are used to hypothesize on the next steps appropriate for group and individual learning.

Documentation makes learning visible, and thus accessible to children, parents, and teachers for interpretation and assessment. It is critical that children learn to evaluate their own work and explain their learning to others. It is educational for parents to see how learning emerges in their children.

In addition to using the CT Preschool Assessment Framework, teachers may be asked to assess other areas of learning either verbally or in writing when such information is requested by consultants or specialists working with individual children.

All children will be assessed on our character development goals using an evidence-based narrative format. Any goals we hold for children require some form of accountability or it is impossible to know if we are meeting those goals as claimed. Ways that children have demonstrated that they are progressing toward meeting the objectives around character development will be documented and included with photographs and narratives in each child's portfolio using a format provided to all teachers.

- Children will **communicate** effectively
- Children will **collaborate** with others
- Children will use **critical thinking** to make decisions
- Children will **engage** and **persevere** in problem solving
- Children will **take risks** in order to learn from experience
- Children will act with **self-control** and **integrity**
- Children will adapt to change with **resilience**

# **8. Family and Cultural Connections**

ToddlerTime supports families by providing opportunities to be involved in the classroom, through parent education, home-school shared activities, family events, open house, newsletters and conferences. Lesson plans are posted and emailed for parent review and include a section for family connections. Parent conferences are held twice a year in November and March where written progress reports are provided. A final progress report is sent home at the end of the year. Parents may request a conference at any time they feel it necessary, for any reason.

Continuity with behavioral expectations is encouraged. We use Positive Behavior Support Procedures throughout our program. Parent education and individual support is also available to assist parents with child behavior.

Sensitivity to cultural diversity and the traditions of families enrolled is evident in how we communicate with children, celebrate holidays, accommodate family requests, and make every attempt to minimize bias, stereotyping, and support inclusion. The preschool does not discriminate on the basis of gender, ability, ethnicity, family characteristics, culture, or beliefs. Curriculum is accessible to all, regardless of cultural or developmental differences if reasonable accommodations can be made.

Assistance with separation is gentle and supportive. Teachers will help each child separate in a way that is comfortable to that child and parent. This might include allowing a parent to stay in the classroom longer than usual, having the child for an abbreviated schedule, sending photos, making phone calls and generally acknowledging the child's and/or the parent's apprehension.

The program provides parents with a variety of connections to community services and resources including professional, social and recreational.

Home-school connections are a part of every lesson plan. In addition, teachers are expected to communicate in spontaneous, natural ways with each family on a regular basis in the form of a casual phone call, an e-mail about their child, or sending home a photograph and/or note about the child doing something special. These efforts to reach out to families have tremendous positive impact and are the most important way we can relate to them.

Teachers are expected to accommodate parents whenever possible, to share progress accurately and in supportive ways. Where it is possible to include families in project work and other learning activities, such opportunities should be encouraged. Parents are partners in the education of children, therefore, it is our responsibility to listen respectfully, collaborate when appropriate, and educate patiently about the curriculum and practices at ToddlerTime.

*"Of course, parents are the most important people in a child's life."*

*~Hillary Clinton*