Intro to the Creative Curriculum

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Building Blocks to Success for All Children
“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.

Involve me and I learn.”

- Benjamin Franklin
Components …
WMELS:
The WI Model Early Learning Standards

Designed to support best practice in all programs serving children under 6 (Birth through kindergarten!)
This document provides a common language and guidance to understand developmental expectations of typically developing children upon the completion of 4K. It is designed to support Madison 4K professionals, elementary school staff, administrators, and families in implementing a high quality 4K program. The Benchmark expectations are not presented in a sequential order, but rather as a target of skills or behaviors to accomplish prior to entering kindergarten.
Creative Curriculum
The MMSD Benchmarks for Development & Learning and *The Creative Curriculum®* are aligned with the WI Model Early Learning Standards (WMELs)

- All children are capable and competent
- Early relationships matter
- A child’s early learning and development is multidimensional
- Expectations of children must be guided by teacher knowledge of early growth/development
- Children learn through play and the active exploration of their environment
Creative Curriculum in Action: “The Learning Environment”

watch for:
  what are teachers doing?
  what are children doing?
  what does the room look like?
Creative Curriculum - Foundation is: Theory & Research

Caring and Teaching

How children develop & learn

The Learning Environment

Partnering w/ Families

What children learn

Blocks
Dramatic play
Manipulatives
Art
Library
Discovery
Sand and Water
Music and Movement
Outdoors
Computers, Cooking
Creative Curriculum - Foundation is: Theory & Research
Research behind Creative Curriculum

- Teacher-Child Interactions & Relationships
- Social-Emotional Competence
- Constructive, Purposeful Play
- Interacting with the Environment
- Partnerships with Families
Teacher-Child Interactions & Relationships

• John Dewey (1897): “education as a social process...classroom community important”

• Lev Vygotsky (1978): “zone of proximal development”

• Birch & Ladd (1997), Howes (2000): “warm, supportive relationships encourage children’s motivation, engagement, self-direction, cooperation, & positive attitudes towards school”
Social-Emotional Competence

- Erik Erikson (1950, 1994): foundation of understanding importance of social-emotional competence

Constructive, Purposeful Play

• Jean Piaget (1972): recognized play and its role in the development of logical thinking

• Smilansky & Shefatya (1999): children with high levels of sociodramatic play in preschool performed better in later school years
Interacting with the Environment

- Dewey & Piaget: children must engage in tasks actively in order to learn.

- Mashburn (2008): way the physical environment is set up helps children know what is important, what they are supposed to do, how to do it – *it can support or undermine children’s attention and persistence.*
Partnerships with Families

- Urie Brofenbrenner (2005): family and school settings are interconnected systems! Developmental potential of each setting is enhanced when there is reciprocal relationship.

- Marcon (1999): frequency of positive parent-teacher contact has a positive effect on school performance
Foundation is: Theory & Research
What do children learn...

Lilian Katz: quotes on tables

#1 The developmental question is not “What can children do?” Rather, it is “What should children do that best serves their development and learning in the long term?”

Hallmark/Disney-type theme (vs) Studies in Children’s Interests

what is important for children’s long term learning?? How will they use the “teddy bear theme” for their future education? “nursery rhymes”?
Margie Carter: (2007)

- Teacher planning (*in a Creative Curriculum classroom*) is not weekly themes, not activities to keep children busy, not paper activities to send home to parents….instead, it should be work/projects chosen for their relevancy to the children’s lives, for their potential to extend over time, for engaging in discovery, for moving them to more complex investigation and representation.
What do children learn...

- 36 objectives for 3-5yo
  - A curriculum without objectives is like a road map without a destination!

- Integrating Learning through “Studies”

- Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4K Benchmarks for Development and Learning</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This document provides a common language and guidance to understand developmental expectations of typically developing children upon the completion of 4K. It is designed to support Madison 4K professionals, elementary school staff, administrators, and families in implementing a high quality 4K program. The Benchmark expectations are not presented in a sequential order, but rather as a target of skills or behaviors to accomplish prior to entering kindergarten.</td>
<td>Madison Metropolitan School District 4-Year-Old Kindergarten</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMSD 4K Benchmarks for Development &amp; Learning and WMELS</td>
<td>Creative Curriculum Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health/Physical Development (physical, motor, sensory)</td>
<td>All Components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Emotional Development (emotional, self-concept, social competence)</td>
<td>FOUNDATION!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognition/General Knowledge (problem solving, mathematical &amp; scientific thinking)</td>
<td>Mathematics Science/Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Dev./Communication (listening/understanding; speaking/communicating; early literacy)</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaches to Learning (curiosity, persistence; creativity &amp; imagination; diversity in learning)</td>
<td>Process Skills Social Studies, the Arts</td>
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</tbody>
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How Children Develop & Learn...

• Creative Curriculum is based on:

  – Brain development
    • (both nature and nurture – brain grows as a result of learning, learning happens in context of relationships)

  – General domains of preschool development
    • (social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language development)

  – Individual differences
    • (temperament, interests, learning styles, life experiences, culture, special needs, etc – approaches to learning!)

• Four-year-old handout
How can you get to #1 using the others??

1. Content Requirements

2. Topics Children are Drawn to

3. Teacher Passions & Interests

4. Upcoming Community or Family Events
#2 Children willingly do what is asked of them – willingness is not a reliable indicator of the value of the activity…
How children learn...

Lilian Katz: quotes on tables

#3 Clearly, it is not useful to learn skills if, in the process of acquiring them, the disposition to use them is lost.

Function of work must be more important than form for 4yo!!

NO WORKSHEETS!
Partnering WITH Families…

- Start with the premise that the family *is* already involved!
- Getting to know families (*appreciate differences!*)
- Making families feel welcome (*actively!*)
- Communicating *WITH* families
- Partnering w/ families on children’s learning (*variety of ways offered*)
Caring & Teaching: Creative Curriculum Teacher’s Role...

- To Create a Classroom Community
- To Positively Guide Children’s Behavior
- To Teach Intentionally and Responsively
  - Using a range/variety of teaching strategies
  - Supporting learning in Interest Areas
  - Supporting learning during routines & transitions
- To Assess Children’s Learning
Caring & Teaching: Creative Curriculum Teacher’s Role…

• To be intentional!
  
  – What is “intentional” teaching??

  – To teach well, Creative Curriculum teachers need to know not only WHAT to teach, but WHY particular concepts, skills, knowledge, and behaviors are important...and HOW to teach in ways that are responsive to the individual needs of children.
Foundation is: Theory & Research

Caring and Teaching

The Learning Environment

What children learn

Partnering w/ Families

How children develop & learn
The Learning Environment...

3 Major Components – Equally Important!!

1. Creating a classroom community
2. Establishing a structure for each day
3. Setting up and maintaining the classroom
   – emotionally & physically!
INTEREST AREAS

- Blocks
- Dramatic play
- Manipulatives
- Art, Library, Discovery
- Sand and Water
- Music and Movement
- Outdoors
- *Computers, Cooking*

The Teacher’s Role

Foundation is: Theory & Research
resources

- www.teachingstrategies.com
- Creative Curriculum Implementation Checklist
- National Association for the Education of Young Children: Developmentally Appropriate Practice [http://www.naeyc.org/DAP](http://www.naeyc.org/DAP)
- Child Care Information Center [http://dpi.state.wi.us/ccic/](http://dpi.state.wi.us/ccic/)
“Be an opener of doors...”

Ralph Waldo Emerson