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Perspectives on early literacy : the Monroe School

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Perspectives on early literacy : the Monroe School

Abstract

This article is based on two days of observations and interviews in an all- kindergarten school in a small midwest city. The purpose of my research was to look at how the steps taken by this school correlate with the steps of Erickson's Dance in addressing the needs and development of the school when becoming an all-kindergarten literacy center. I feel that the information in this article would benefit educators who would like to implement changes in their schools.

PERSPECTIVES ON EARLY LITERACY:
THE MONROE SCHOOL

A Graduate Journal Article
Submitted to the
Division of Reading and Language Arts
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
Mona S. Rosdail
October, 1999

This Journal Article by: Mona S. Rosdail

Titled: Perspectives on Early Literacy: The Monroe School

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Editors
Iowa Reading Journal
Luther College
Decorah, IA 52101

Dear Iowa Reading Journal Editors,

The enclosed article entitled, *Perspectives on Early Literacy: The Monroe School*, is being submitted to you for your review. The article is based on two days of observations and interviews in an all- kindergarten school in a small midwest city. The purpose of my research was to look at how the steps taken by this school correlate with the steps of Erickson's Dance in addressing the needs and development of the school when becoming an all-kindergarten literacy center. I feel that the information in this article would benefit educators who would like to implement changes in their schools. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mona S. Rosdail

ABSTRACT

In a small midwest city, early childhood educators took the opportunity to create a more effective developmentally appropriate all-kindergarten literacy center that came into being over the course of several years after many other programs were attempted, including Predict 1, Alternate Kindergarten, and Developmental Kindergarten. A series of steps called "The Dance", based on Erickson's change theory (1995), beginning with forming an improvement team and finishing with monitoring progress, demonstrate how a school district can successfully implement changes. In examining the stages that this school went through to come to an all-kindergarten literacy center, it was discovered that three "dances" took place simultaneously demonstrating steps similar to Erickson's Dance. One "dance" brought a new curriculum and assessment with a move toward teacher as facilitator and planner of a learning environment centered around each individual child. A second "dance" brought full-day kindergarten. Dance Three brought an all-kindergarten school. All "Three Dances" involved parents, teachers, and administrators who served as change agents to successfully (but unconsciously) utilize Erickson's change theory.

Introduction

As many changes come about in any school, be it adopting a foreign language program or implementing a reading program, concerns about the success of the children encourage the district to consider many different aspects of educational change. Having the support of the people who will be directly affected by the changes is necessary in ensuring a lasting effect (Erickson, 1995). Any school district expecting change must remember that change is a process rather than an event (Wu, 1988). The teachers' interactions are events and they inform processes. In making this change process become successful, the district must take certain steps including all involved parties in the district, which can include parents, teachers, administrators, and possibly others, from here on referred to as the district or the school.

What steps can change agents take to address the needs and developments of their schools? As many schools attempt to bring about successful change, Erickson (1995) offers guidelines on how to bring it about. How do the steps taken by this school correlate with the steps of Erickson's Dance in addressing the needs and development of the school in becoming an all-kindergarten literacy center? Explaining one principal's perceptions of her school's attempt to adapt chosen changes through Erickson's Dance may demonstrate the helpfulness of the Dance to other schools.

Review of Literature

Educators need to allow sufficient time to see if change will indeed occur (Wu, 1988). In education, there are four kinds of change: changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and in group or organizational performance (Wu, 1988). In most cases, it is the teacher who ultimately makes the difference

according to Valencia & Killion (1988). They name five obstacles to teacher change: poorly planned staff development, teacher isolation, reluctance to change, failure to address the needs of adult learners, and rigid expectations. Overcoming these obstacles then becomes as simple as applying sound principles of change: teachers need time and opportunities to deal with stress and anxiety. In collaborative settings, teachers tend to interact more often about professional concerns. They learn to seek and give support and assistance to one another, a critical component of successful change (Valencia & Killion, 1988).

The process of unlearning may be more difficult than learning, as Otto suggested in his discussion with Pogrow (1991) about programmatic routine. For example, think of the last time you went on a trip and had a rental car (the same principle would apply if you purchased a new car). Did you reach for the wiper control or radio using the movement you learned in your own car, only to discover that you grabbed for the wrong spot on the dashboard (Wu, 1988)? In a cyclical manner, once students succeed, teachers seek ways to make themselves more effective (Lortie, 1975) which, in turn, fosters greater student success. It has been suggested that training and evaluation should be separated and, perhaps, performed by different people (Joyce & Showers, 1987; Rozenholtz, 1985). Success is then determined by the effects on teacher and students rather than by fidelity to the plan. Many teachers commented on the value of developing a network of colleagues that provide a support system outside of the staff development setting (Valencia & Killion, 1988). In staff development, oftentimes teachers are dealing with the things most difficult to change: attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs. The changes which occur in terms of buildings, instructional materials, school organization, curriculum content,

operational processes, and school purposes are, in reality, but manifestations of change in the persons responsible for those elements of programming (Wu, 1988).

When looking at changes in curriculum in an early childhood literacy program, educators will notice that some students experience delays in learning. An explanation for these delays is not that the child is taking a year to mature, but that “s/he is taking a year to learn many things, including several dimensions that contribute to reading and writing and which lay the foundation of later success” (Clay, 1993, p.3). Scheduling is also an important factor. “Actually, programmed routines play an important role in any creative endeavor, and they are essential for the promulgation of any important concept.” (Pogrow, 1991, p. 45). Otto (1991) agreed that an important quest, then, is to find effective ways to blend programmatic routines with intuitive processes. While searching for an effective approach to helping students experience success, educators find it necessary to change existing practices.

Erickson suggested that there are a series of steps toward successful change within a school called the Dance. The eight steps are:

1. Form an improvement team.

A team should be formed to set goals and monitor activities.

2. Help team set priorities for change.

Establishing priorities is important in order to overcome three dilemmas that plague change. Some teachers may already be implementing some of the recommendations and will not see the changes as new. Some recommendations may conflict with current practices, and there is a limit to how much energy and attention any individual can devote to a variety of efforts at one time.

3. Identify dimensions for change.

In order to grow toward the chosen ideals, the teachers look at the six dimensions of teaching: goals/objectives, content, teaching strategies, materials and resources, assessment procedures, and classroom management. Rarely do all of these six dimensions of teaching need to change.

4. Describe full implementation.

Change can involve a one-for-all (the student goal), all-for-one (the content, materials, resources, assessment procedures), and everyone for him/herself (teaching strategies, classroom management) plan.

5. Describe current status and stages for change.

The stages of growth can be motivating because, as adult learners, teachers often prefer to figure out their own ways to try out new ideas and learn new skills.

6. Assess obstacles to growth.

Assessing obstacles to growth helps to keep track of what may be preventing movement toward full implementation. It may be decided what must be done to remove or lessen the obstacle.

7. Implement change strategies.

Develop task-name-time (TNT) documents that specify tasks, names of people who are responsible for each task, and times for task tryouts.

8. Monitor progress.

The team uses step 5 to determine what strategies are working, what problems have arisen, and what growth has been made.

There are many beliefs about how to plan for a school's future, ranging from top-down to bottom-up decisions. Erickson's Dance is one point of view for processing effective school changes using the people that would be affected by

the change as the change agents. That was the case of this school, an all-kindergarten literacy center in a small midwest city.

This school had many changes in recent years; changes in curriculum and assessment, scheduling, and the most innovative being the creation of an all-kindergarten literacy center. The purpose of this paper was to look at the school's existence as an all-kindergarten literacy center. This study looked at the following research question: How do the steps taken by this school correlate with the steps of Erickson's Dance in addressing the needs and development of the school when becoming an all-kindergarten literacy center?

Research Methods

The graduate student researcher spent 2 full days (March 19-20, 1997) in this school, a school that had undergone many recent changes with new and innovative ideas. On Monday, March 19, permission was given to roam in and out of the classrooms for the entire day for the purpose of observing literacy activities. Before the children arrived, arrangements were made with the principal and each of the teachers to meet with them individually on the following day for an interview (Appendix A). Each educator was given a list of questions for review prior to the interviews (Appendix B). Nine of the ten regular kindergarten classrooms and the Alternate Kindergarten classroom were observed. One teacher was interviewed on Monday.

On Tuesday, March 20, the observations were completed by sitting in on the remaining kindergarten class and one of the preschool (STEP-UP) classrooms. Interviews began before the children arrived. Teachers were interviewed during their planning periods or lunch breaks. Two teachers chose to interview together. The interviews were approximately 20 to 30 minutes

each and were audiotaped. These audiotapes were then transcribed.

For the purpose of this paper, the transcripts from the interview with the principal were chosen primarily since many of the current teachers were new staff when the change occurred. K.E. was one of few involved from start to finish. She started as a teacher and moved into the role of principal after the implementation of the program. Therefore the paper focuses on her from start to finish.

K. E. was the principal at this school in a small midwest city, and had been for 4 years at the time of the interview. This school is an all-kindergarten school for three elementary schools in the southeast quadrant of the school district that had undergone facility, scheduling, curriculum, and assessment changes since 1990.

K. E. taught in early childhood classrooms for 17 years. Beginning as a kindergarten teacher, K. E. then began to help develop other programs. In the early 70s, she was involved with a federally funded program called Predict 1, which was an at-risk program for 4-year-olds. Following this, she taught Alternate Kindergarten (AK). Alternate Kindergarten was an option for parents of children with summer birthdays. If parents felt that their child was too young for a regular kindergarten program but was ready for school, parents were given the choice of enrolling their child in AK and then the following year the child was enrolled in the regular kindergarten.

K. E. also taught in a Developmental Kindergarten class, which was a step between preschool and kindergarten. According to K.E., Developmental Kindergarten was a program designed for lower-functioning children who, because of their age, might otherwise have been enrolled in kindergarten. This program gave them an extra year of school before entering first grade. Another

such program was the prefirst classroom which was a step between kindergarten and first grade. Children who were still not ready for first grade after having been in kindergarten for a year were placed in prefirst for a year in between kindergarten and first grade as an alternative to retention.

Within K. E.'s 17-year span, the school district was "grappling for the answers, solutions to children who were coming to us not very well equipped for school" (K. E.). So the school district experimented with some early intervention programs. With federal funds available for preschool, the school district took advantage of the opportunity to try to design an effective program.

As an early childhood educator, K. E. was struggling administratively with these programs. Through her own dealings with these programs, she began looking at what was appropriate programming for young children and started looking at the research available through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). She found that, although early intervention programs need to exist, those she had researched delayed services for children (NAEYC, 1990). Many programs designed to help lower-functioning children held the children back so that they were older than their peers when they reached first grade. This meant that the schools were hanging children back for a certain amount of time in order to get them up to a certain level before they went into a regular kindergarten setting.

Based on the principal's interview, it was said that the district came to the belief that educators should individualize the curriculum, regardless of the type of program. According to the school district's rubric (Appendix C), it looked at children developmentally and designed a curriculum that suited each child's needs, no matter where he/she was developmentally. The educators looked at what they needed and did not necessarily look at any program as a solution.

This took the school through several steps in becoming an all-kindergarten literacy center.

The Results

Many changes took place over the years as the school looked for more appropriate curriculum for early education. The search for more appropriate curriculum and assessment led the staff to full-day kindergarten at the same time that the school district was trying to find a solution for space issues. In comparing these changes to Erickson's Dance, it was discovered that actually three Dances took place simultaneously. The three Dances at the school were for curriculum and assessment, full-day kindergarten, and an all-kindergarten school. Each successive Dance was an integral part of its predecessor.

According to Erickson, The Dance begins with forming an improvement team. Much of the team's responsibilities fell on K. E. as Early Childhood Facilitator.

The Dance for Curriculum and Assessment

As the district searched for answers to the space problem and explored different early childhood programs, the early childhood educators took the opportunity to make changes in the curriculum. The top priority was that the teachers moved away from direct instruction, a model where language arts was presented through workbooks and worksheets, to a more active learning approach. However, they maintained their Houghton Mifflin reading program and Math Their Way programs as they felt that these programs complimented their efforts to facilitate learning.

According to the principal, the educators involved recognized what developmentalists had always known: that young children learn best by doing, exploring, and discovering the world on their own (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1989). The teachers became facilitators of that environment and changed their roles as classroom teachers in designing appropriate environments, materials, and guiding students' learning through play and discovery. While the educators maintained some of their original curriculum, they went about delivering it in a different way.

Classroom observations proved to agree with the observations of K.E. They found the children "writing in the journals, pencils in hand, phonemic awareness, kids are reading, and lots of language" (K. E.). The curriculum moved away from the drill-and-practice perspective and was more hands-on learning through language-rich experiences, projects, and learning centers. There was still direct instruction included in the new curriculum, but the school district claimed to have found the balance, the middle ground. They looked at using small-group, large-group, and individual experiences.

The educators involved in the pilot full-day kindergarten program met to develop a curriculum guide during the summers. They went to the district kindergarten teachers and met with them periodically to share the curriculum guide and talk about what needed to happen. They had panel discussions with those who piloted the program, discussing appropriate instruction for the young learners. Staff development was accomplished through collaboration.

Several attempts were made to find appropriate programming for young children. These programs delayed services for children and left the school district continuing to search. In an attempt to change assessment policies, the

district needed to consider parent and community concerns and willingness to change.

With a focus on the teacher being a facilitator, some direct instruction was included in the new curriculum. The classrooms became places where children saw literacy all around them through projects and learning centers. There was a lot of reading, writing, letters, and language in everything that they did.

Assessment was also addressed. A team of teachers at the school developed appropriate report card and rubric (Appendix C) to go along with the curriculum. It was found that not all of the teachers accepted the rubric due to slightly different philosophies, but it was agreed that it was a guide that could be made to fit their purposes. It gave educators a guide to assess the progress of active learning and play as a way that young children learn. The educators worked under the belief that young children learn best by doing, exploring, and discovering the world on their own.

Up to this point, each of the elementary schools had been assessing the children as they came into register for school. The teachers had used the Metropolitan Readiness at one stage and then had developed a district-wide assessment. When the children would go to the schools to register, they would be tested and a process of placement decisions began. Some children would be placed in early intervention programs and others would be placed in regular programs. When the schools went to full-day kindergarten, they chose to move away from this assessment. They embraced the notion that they would take every child where s/he is and then develop a curriculum within the regular kindergarten setting to meet their needs. The children would also be heterogeneously grouped.

In their interviews, some of the teachers mentioned that K. E. read the current research and distributed relevant articles to the teachers to help them with curriculum and assessment issues. She then assumed a consultant role and worked with the teachers in the classroom to develop appropriate curriculum for young children.

The Dance for Full-Day Kindergarten

A full-day kindergarten program was piloted at one of the district's elementary schools in the mid-to-late 80s. In the first year, the district began with a couple of classrooms and expanded to five classrooms in the second year. They started out small in the move from half-day kindergarten to full-day kindergarten and "it was as if the door swung wide open and this wonderful breath of fresh air opened in our district!" (K. E.). The district embraced the notion that they needed to take a hard look at their young learners. There was tremendous research available and a great deal of good data to support changing the curriculum, changing the standard, and moving away from early assessment and plugging children into the programs mentioned earlier (NAEYC, 1990).

Since the school district would be doubling its professional staff, financing for the project had to be addressed. This was a minor issue for the school. The school received the same funding per pupil from the state that it did for its half-day program, so the school district made up the difference from its local funds. A certain amount of full-day kindergarten costs came out of instructional support money which came from property taxes.

In a half-day program, the school district found that the teachers and children were continually rushed to get so much done. The activities were

given less time. The learning centers were given short blocks of time. However, the full-day program afforded them a little more relaxed pace. Projects could be extended so there could be learning centers and project work going on. Something could be started in the morning and completed in the afternoon. Activities could be extended and larger blocks of time could be given for scheduled activity.

With the extended day, there could be a tendency to try to incorporate more academics into the day. However, the school used the extra time with the children to block in huge amounts of time for self-selection where the children could work in their learning centers and on projects. There were still the expectations that the children would recognize letters, have beginning sounds, and have a sight vocabulary. It was found that not every child reached the point where they acquired these skills, but the school continued to have the same expectations. Even though they were not teaching to these expectations directly, this was a natural outcome of discovery in a print-rich environment (Lieberman & Lieberman, 1990). Most children would discover letters, beginning sounds, sight vocabulary on their own; some wouldn't. But it was expected that most children would learn about reading in this type of environment without formal reading instruction (Teale and Sulzby, 1986).

Upon entering a full-day kindergarten program, some children did not have the level of endurance to go for the whole day. Being away from home for a long time was difficult; some just needed to nap in the afternoons. However, this was usually short-lived. Children who needed to nap were given the opportunity to do so as needed. It was discovered that the classroom atmosphere was much more relaxed because it was a nurturing environment. Teachers got to know their students very well because they spent the whole day

with them. This became a major part of the child's day so parents got involved. The school assumed a greater responsibility for the children for a major part of the day, and because the teachers did, they knew that they had to address all different areas of their children's development: social/emotional, physical, and intellectual. The philosophy and goals (Appendix D) behind this program were that the children be given many opportunities to discover the world around them (NAEYC, 1990). Young children were not pressured about what they were supposed to be learning. They were given many opportunities to discover learning.

The Dance for an All-Kindergarten School

At the time that the pilot program for full-day kindergarten program was under way, the school district was trying to find a solution to its space problems. A group of parents and district people served on a citizens' committee to look at the space problem in the southeast quadrant of the city that consisted of three elementary schools.

Two options that were being seriously considered by the space utilization committee were based largely on the availability of the Monroe building, previously used as a developmental center for special needs children. As inclusion and mainstreaming became a greater focus for the district, the need for a special education center became extinct. Having an empty building to use brought the committee to decide on either moving all of the fifth grades or all of the kindergartens to Monroe.

As the district prepared to take all of the kindergartners away from the elementary schools, they made plans to transport all of them to the school. Busing was the selling point for convincing parents to accept the new concept

for the school. All kindergartners would ride the bus to and from school.

Teachers were recruited to make the move also. The current kindergarten teachers were given the option of moving to the school as a kindergarten teacher or taking a position at another grade level to remain where they were. Teachers at other elementary grade levels within the district who wanted to teach kindergarten were given the option to move to the new building. New teachers were also found to fill these positions.

The people in the school district had spent much time over the years testing intervention programs based on research: Predict 1, Alternate Kindergarten, Developmental Kindergarten, and Prefirst were among them. The school district believed that all these programs delayed services for children. The district continued to search for an appropriate early childhood program. The research at the time led them to believe that what they wanted to pursue was to individualize the program as they looked at children developmentally and not at any program in particular (NAEYC, 1989).

To make the school an all-kindergarten literacy center, the school district needed a busing system that would transport all of its kindergartners. These kindergartners were going to a building where there were no older, experienced students to help guide the way.

Some kindergartners had ridden the buses with the older children, had gotten off at the school with them, and had the older children to help them get off at the right spot after school. But this was no longer true. A system was developed where the buses were assigned colors that the children learned. Kindergartners had to learn their own colors to find the right bus.

Imagine the challenge of busing 300 kindergartners to one site! When the school opened its doors as an all-kindergarten literacy center, K. E. was the

early childhood consultant. She was present as nine or ten buses pulled up with only 5-year-old children “hitting the pavement.” It was very difficult. During the first year, the school worked through some difficult transportation issues. They had to develop a system for getting children on and off the buses to ensure everyone’s safety and accountability. “It was just a situation of getting the kinks worked out and having the parents trust that the district was going to be able to take care of their kids” (K. E.). Some children fell asleep on the bus as it passed their houses. Therefore, the bus drivers also learned as much as they could about the children to help the children get home, especially since there were no older children on the buses to help them recognize their stops.

Over the years, the school developed an elaborate system for getting all the students to school and home again. There were a lot of checks and balances involved in this, including radio contact with the bus drivers and occasionally including even the superintendent manning the phones as concerned parents called, asking where their children were (i.e.: day one).

Discussion

In addressing the changes that occurred at the school over the course of several years in its search for an appropriate early childhood literacy program, it was found that there were three Dances taking place simultaneously. K. E.’s role as a change-agent began as a classroom teacher searching for better ways to teach her students and later she emerged as the principal of the school that resulted from three of Erickson’s Dances. A full-day kindergarten was piloted and teachers developed a curriculum guide that they later shared with the teachers of the new school. Curriculum that allowed teachers to be facilitators was adopted. They moved away from assessment that sorted and selected

children to heterogeneous grouping where programs were planned around the needs of the child. It also resulted in teacher recruitment for the kindergarten classes and an elaborate, organized busing system for kindergartners.

Once K. E. became involved as a change-agent in the search for appropriate curriculum, she found her job description changing to accommodate her role. The district investigated options. Their search for appropriate curriculum led them to also look at other dimensions of change; teaching strategies and assessment procedures, resources, and scheduling. After piloting full-day kindergarten and developing a curriculum guide, plans were set into motion to move the kindergartens to the empty building. Transportation arrangements were made to convince parents of an all-kindergarten literacy center, and teachers were recruited to make the move to the school. Once in the new building, K. E. continued to provide the teachers with current relevant literature.

Through addressing many of the school district's concerns about meeting the needs of its students, a very focused and learner-centered kindergarten literacy center came into existence. In its search for appropriate early childhood programs, the school district came to full-day kindergarten. When the Monroe building became available, the teachers were able to alleviate some space issues and took the opportunity to rework their curriculum and assessment with the move to the kindergarten center. The faculty at Monroe believed that teachers needed to facilitate learning in a developmentally appropriate environment where children were given many opportunities to learn through play and hands-on activities.

Summary

The process of going from a school district with half-day kindergarten classes in its neighborhood schools using direct instruction to a full-day, all-kindergarten, child-centered literacy center was a success because the people affected by the change were involved in the steps recommended by Erickson: selecting a team, setting priorities for change, identifying dimensions for change, describing full implementation, describing current status and stages for change, assessing obstacles to growth, implementing change, and monitoring progress. As a result, a district experiencing space problems took the opportunity to make considerable scheduling changes to create a more effective developmentally appropriate learning environment. This school became a unique and productive all-kindergarten literacy center. The steps Erickson recommended for bringing about successful change within a school correlated very closely to the stages of change experienced by parents, teachers, and administrators at one school in a small midwest city.

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Appendix A

Research Participation Informed Consent

I, _____, agree to participate in the research study, "Perspectives on Early Literacy: The Monroe School" being carried out by Mona S. Rosdail (graduate student researcher) at the University of Northern Iowa.

I have been informed by the researcher of the general nature of the project and any possible risks arising from it. I understand the following:

1. My participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time.
2. The project involves observations and interviews which will be audio recorded.
3. All records will be kept confidential and used for educational purposes.
4. Upon my request, a written summary of the project's findings will be provided to me.

I have received a copy of this informed consent.

Signature of Participant

Date

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Appendix B

Interview Questions

The following questions were written, along with the purpose for the interviewer's presence, and given to each of the teachers and the principal prior to the interviews.

1. What changes have come about along with the change to full-day kindergarten?
2. How did these changes come about?
3. What philosophy supports these changes?
4. What are the results of these changes?



	EMERGING	EARLY STAGE	INTERMEDIATE STAGE	EXTENDING
1. Listens and responds to information and directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not respond verbally or through actions to information or directions responds with questions or comments that are unrelated to the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repeats what is said responds only to one oral direction or to simple language and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> responds to two or more oral directions given consecutively begins to show understanding of more complex information and language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows understanding of oral directions or discussions by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> asking questions drawing a picture performing a dramatization other activities
2. Expresses thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not express own thoughts or ideas uses single word responses exhibiting a limited vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expresses thoughts and ideas in phrases or simple sentences speaks to others but does not carry on a two-way conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks in complete sentences shows expanding vocabulary carries on a two-way conversation, does not always stay on topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses more complex sentences adds details when expressing ideas exchanges information with others, staying on topic
3. Manipulates writing, drawing, and cutting tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows little understanding of writing, drawing, and/or cutting tools or how to use them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explores the use of writing, drawing, and cutting tools accomplishes some tasks with assistance draws a recognizable picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses writing, drawing, and cutting tools to accomplish a task may not attend to lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide variety of writing, drawing, and cutting tools to accomplish a task attends to lines in writing, drawing, and cutting
4. Comprehends a story after hearing one read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows no understanding of content after hearing a story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can identify the characters can identify one or more events may need assistance in recalling details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies characters identifies story plot recalls sequence of events does not need assistance retelling the story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> displays understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> characters story plot motives relates story to his/her own experiences
5. Applies concepts of print to books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows no understanding of what books are or how to use them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> holds book correctly attends mostly to pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows understanding that pictures and words tell a story can make up a story related to the pictures or words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> follows print correctly (front to back, top to bottom, left to right) without assistance points accurately to words as they are read to them
6. Uses strategies to read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not use strategies to read print recognizes some alphabet letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads some environmental print reads some sight words knows most alphabet letters begins to associate sounds with letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knows most letter sounds begins to use strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> picture cues letter sounds asking others using the content has a growing sight word vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads familiar phrases, sentences, or stories using a variety of strategies uses some sound/symbol relationships when reading predictable books or new words
7. Writes to communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not "write" does not show that writing communicates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses writing to communicate using random squiggles, scribbles, and/or drawings writes first name independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses alphabet letters when writing copies letters and words from their environment uses temporary spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses writing to communicate to others temporary spelling has a phonetic base begins to use some conventional spelling begins to use capitalization and punctuation
8. Manipulates technology to perform desired tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has little or no experience with computers and other audio/video equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begins to explore the use of technology and demonstrates proper care of the computer; may include audio and video equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locates the major parts of a computer when asked begins to demonstrate pre-keyboarding techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> starts to use menu-driven software demonstrates pre-keyboarding techniques
9. Uses the problem solving process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has difficulty in recognizing there is a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses some strategies needs assistance in selecting and applying some strategies is improving in explaining how problem was solved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understands & restates the problem applies strategy independently solves problems explains how the problem was solved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies and uses alternative ways to solve problems creates problems for others to solve
10. Observes, sorts, and classifies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not sort objects by any attribute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sorts by one attribute, such as: size, color, or shape without assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can sort and re-sort using different attributes can explain how objects are sorted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes sorting systems of others explains how groups are sorted
11. Organizes and interprets information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participates in making class graphs of real objects needs assistance in knowing where to place object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> places real objects on a class graph without assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes a picture representation of a real graph and interprets the data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> independently organizes objects into graph form to show which group has more interprets simple graphs, charts, and maps

	EMERGING	EARLY STAGE	INTERMEDIATE STAGE	EXTENDING
12. Makes and describes patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has difficulty recognizing and describing a pattern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> copies and extends a simple pattern (AB, ABC, AAB) creates and explains simple pattern with help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes and describes pattern in the environment creates and explains simple patterns without help inserts a missing element into a pattern translates a pattern from actions or pictures to manipulatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies, constructs, and extends increasingly more complex patterns describes the pattern in more than one way
13. Demonstrates counting skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may rote count to ten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rote counts between 11-19 counts objects accurately to 10 may need to count over to tell how many in all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rote counts between 20-49 counts objects accurately to 20 tells how many have been counted counts backward from ten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rote counts to 50 or beyond counts 25 or more objects accurately counts forward and backward from a given number between 1 to 20 begins to count by 10's and 5's
14. Shows number sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has difficulty representing a number with objects or pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses objects to represent numbers 1-10 connects numerals (1-5) to objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> connects numerals (6-10) to objects instantly recognizes up to 5 objects in a patterned set (dice, dominoes) uses objects to explain 4 and 5 in various ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begins to recognize up to 10 objects in a patterned set (cards, dominoes) uses objects to represent 6 and 7 in various ways
15. Models and explains addition and subtraction stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has difficulty constructing a model with objects from a story setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> builds a model of joining and/or separating stories to determine how many in all or how many are left 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> creates and solves joining and separating stories using manipulatives may give a number sentence to go with the story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> connects a number sentence to joining and separating stories. (e.g., after telling the story; 3 blue birds in a tree. Along came 2 birds. Child is able to give or show the number sentence $3+2=5$) may record number sentences
16. Understands other math concepts				
16.1 Geometry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attend to attributes of shape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begins to identify shapes in his/her environment explores using various shapes and objects when building, drawing, and in other activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> matches like and similar shapes begins to differentiate between 2- and 3-dimensional shapes describes properties of 2- and 3-dimensional shapes informally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> labels a few 2- and 3-dimensional shapes in real world connects 2- and 3-dimensional representations (e.g., build a 3-dimensional construction to match a picture)
16.2 Estimation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> response indicates lack of understanding when estimating or has no response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practices estimating with a group needs assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practices comparing amounts initiates estimating on own estimates may not be reasonable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses previous knowledge so a pattern of reasonableness emerges
16.3 Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not seem to understand that objects and attributes can be measured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begins to recognize measurable attributes of height, weight, length, volume, time, and temperature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> begins to measure with non-standard measures (e.g., unifix cubes, tiles, string) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes that different tools measure different attributes



**Standards of Performance
Art, Music, and Physical Education
Personal/Social Development Rubrics**

	AREA OF CONCERN	SOME PROGRESS	EXPECTED PROGRESS	AREA OF STRENGTH
1. Exhibits courtesy, respect, and positive attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently demonstrates lack of courtesy, respect, and positive attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires occasional assistance regarding courtesy, respect, and positive attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continually interacts with others in a positive manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently exhibits exceptional attitudes and is respectful of the abilities of others
2. Demonstrates effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently fails to apply himself/herself to assigned task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is inconsistent at applying himself/herself to assigned tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effort is consistent with his/her ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently demonstrates exceptional effort
3. Listens to and follows directions/rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently fails to adhere to classroom directions/rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frequently needs reminders concerning classroom procedures/rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> follows directions/rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently demonstrates exceptional ability to follow directions/rules
4. Talks at appropriate times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently talks at inappropriate times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires repeated reminders concerning inappropriate talking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks at appropriate times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is a positive listener and contributor in all discussions
5. Accepts Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibits repeated disregard for classroom procedures and use of equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows acceptable responsibility, but is inconsistent in its application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates acceptable responsibility in all areas of concern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates high level of responsibility and applies it to all activities

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN PHILOSOPHY

The Full-Day Kindergarten program is based on the following philosophy:

- That the kindergarten program should be planned to stimulate the total balanced growth of the child in the following developmental domains: motor development, language development, sensory and perceptual development, cognitive and intellectual development, social development, emotional and personal development, self-care, and adaptive behavior.
- That all children can learn and succeed. Different levels of development and ability are expected, valued, and accepted.
- That curriculum must be based on each child's developmental needs, interests, and learning styles. Children's learning in the basic skill areas should occur primarily through projects and learning centers that teachers plan and that reflect children's interest and suggestions.
- That play is an important part of the early childhood learning experience and should be an integral part of the full-day kindergarten curriculum. Children learn by doing, imitating, observing, exploring, examining, investigating, experimenting, and questioning.
- That young children learn best through self-selected hands-on experiences and active participation in a positive and supportive environment. This environment should provide opportunities for each child to take risks, make decisions, and solve problems.
- That cognitive development should be approached in a developmental manner with emphasis being placed on process rather than product.
- That acquiring language is a critical area in early childhood and should be an integral part of all experiences provided.
- That guidance in an early childhood classroom should involve positive reinforcement with firm, consistent procedures to encourage the children to move toward positive self-image, independence, and responsibility for their actions.
- That a cooperative partnership between home and school provides a supportive environment for the child and opportunities should be provided for parents to better understand the school setting, their child's development, and the educational experiences.
- That the full-day kindergarten is unlike any other year. It is one of the first important steps in the school life of a child and should initiate a lifelong positive attitude toward learning.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN GOALS

The developmentally appropriate kindergarten program will build a foundation for later learning. Lasting learning, real learning, only results when the learner is an active participant. To accomplish this, the Full-Day Kindergarten will:

1. Respond to the unique needs/capabilities of each child by enhancing abilities through multilevel experiences, repetitive activities of large group, small group, and individual activities.
2. Provide an integrated curriculum drawing content and activities from art, music, physical education, language arts, spatial/numerical/quantitative relationships, health, science, and social studies.
3. Provide an intellectually stimulating, planned, child-centered environment: experienced-based activities and manipulative materials which permit...
 - active involvement,
 - social interactions,
 - concrete experiences,
 - experimenting and exploration,
 - role playing,
 - questioning and problem solving,

through a balance of self-selected/self-directed learning centers and teacher structured learning centers; large group/small group/individual activities.
4. Provide an environment which fosters:
 - a positive self-image,
 - a sense of trust in adults and the environment,
 - self-reliance,
 - self-confidence,
 - an appreciation for the creativity of others.
5. Help each child learn to take initiative, to work independently/cooperatively, and to learn and follow the rules for the classroom and school.
6. Recognize play as a child's work and as a viable means for learning about self, others, and world.
7. Emphasize the use of materials and activities which put a premium on personal choice, invention, and imagination.
8. Help each child grow in large and small motor ability.

9. Use the child's own language, experiences, and stages of development as the basis for reading and writing activities.
10. Help each child use language as both a tool of learning and a means of communication.
11. Help children grow in appreciation of literature and the process of reading through creative drama, an opportunity to hear rhyme/poetry, and a daily stratum.
12. Use manipulatives in their environment and real experiences to develop scientific curiosity and mathematical understanding.
13. Encourage appropriate behavior through guidance techniques which include positive reinforcement, group and individual problem solving, redirection, logical consequences, verbal expression of feelings, and patience.
14. Determine children's individual strengths, areas of need, and progress through on-going observations, formal assessment, and parent/teacher communication.
15. Use evaluation of children's progress and achievement to plan curriculum to meet individual needs, communicate with parents, and evaluate the program's effectiveness.
16. Involve parents as partners in the learning process through honest, consistent, and useful communication.
17. Recognize the kindergarten year as a year of foundation learning and development in its own right; not as a year to teach first grade skills.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Children's developmental characteristics, rather than chronological age, must be the focus for appropriate program planning. In any kindergarten group there is a range of developmental ability, each child having his/her own rate of development.

Predictable, sequential developmental characteristics have remained constant and are common to all fives and sixes (Young Children, 1984; DPI, 1979; PDK Newsletter, 1982).

- Physically active, eager and noisy; tires easily
 - Girls are usually a year ahead of boys physically
 - Attention span increasing but has short periods of interest; easily distracted
 - Takes care of dressing and personal needs
 - Becoming confident about physical skills
 - Generally has developed handedness
-
- Becoming more outgoing and social
 - Likes to play cooperatively, but still self-centered (me/I stage)
 - Beginning to learn self-concept
 - Enjoys role taking and empathy practice (putting self in other person's place)
 - Able to use words to express feelings and cope with situations
 - May be insolent, impulsive
 - Still needs reassurance and affection
 - Still needs adult help to calm down but beginning to develop self-control
 - Wants recognition; to be first; sometimes jealous of others
 - Manifests joy and a sense of humor
-
- Girls are usually 6 to 12 months ahead of boys intellectually
 - Learns by using all the senses: doing, imitating, observing, exploring, experimenting, questioning
 - Curious about people and how the world works
 - Learns best about the world and clarifies concepts through play
 - Thinks mainly of the present; does not easily comprehend time and relationships
 - Likes to be read to
 - Interested in telling stories about own experiences
 - Beginning to understand the difference between fantasy and reality
 - Interested in numbers, letters, reading, and writing
 - Becoming more interested in making a final product