

Stacking Blocks [video]

About Empowering Preschool Quality (EPQ)

This collection was created to provide resources for early childhood professionals and the trainers providing professional development for them.

With the strong focus on early childhood education in recent years the EPQ Project is striving to meet the needs of teachers who are continually working to better serve young children. As the EPQ Project continues to grow, content will be added and revised as appropriate to meet the changing needs of teaching professionals and trainers.

As you explore this site, you will find a wealth of information including:

- [Video](#) examples of children and teachers in classroom settings that relate to specific
- Iowa Early Learning Standards ([IELS](#))
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards ([IQPPS](#))
- National Association for the Education of Young Children ([NAEYC](#)) Standards and Accreditation Criteria
- A page for Trainers with resources to support their work

Although this work is based primarily on Iowa standards, the information contained in this web site is useful to early childhood professionals, consultants, or professional development providers outside of Iowa. The video examples illustrate high-quality preschool practices and will reflect the standards adopted by most states.

The EPQ Project was developed to help early childhood professionals and trainers achieve ever higher levels of excellence. You can help the EPQ Project achieve this by sharing your suggestions on how we can improve via our comment form.

NAEYC

Curriculum: Essential Characteristics

2.A.12- The curriculum guides...Ms. Gillette...to plan for children's engagement in play (including dramatic play and blocks) that is integrated into classroom topics of study.

Ms. Gillette helps children build a castle from blocks. As they are finishing the fence around the castle, Ms. Gillette suggests they put spikes on the fence, "to keep the foxes out, or the Big Bad Wolf", a reference to the well known "Three Little Pigs" story.

Designing Enriched Learning Environments

3.A.04- Ms. Gillette **organizes space and selects materials in all content and developmental areas to stimulate exploration, experimentation, discovery, and conceptual learning.**

The block area is organized so that a variety of different types of blocks are easily accessible to children. The area is self contained so that children may build structures without concern that they might be knocked over accidentally by someone walking by.

Responding to Children's Interests and Needs

3.E.04- Ms. Gillette uses her **knowledge of children's... interests, ideas, and skills to tailor learning opportunities for...individuals.**

Ms. Gillette talks with Lily about the structure they are creating together. She asks questions to stimulate Lily's reasoning about the structure, and suggests a dramatic play element when adding "spikes" to the fence (to keep the foxes out, and to keep out the Big Bad Wolf).

IELS

8.2-Engagement and Persistence

Children purposefully choose and persist in experiences and activities.

Lily **persists in and completes a variety of...self-initiated tasks, activities, projects, and experiences.**

Lily builds a block structure and figures out how different shapes fit together. She tries different blocks and appears to learn from her errors. She also accepts suggestions from Ms. Gillette. Once she builds an ice cream cone shape on one side of the structure, she moves to the other side of the structure to build one there as well, and persists until both sides look the same.

11.2-Patterns

Children understand patterns.

Lily shows skills in recognizing and creating some patterns...and...predicts what comes next in a pattern.

Lily and Ms. Gillette work together to recreate part of a block structure that "looks like an ice cream cone." Lily discerns what shapes she will need to recreate the ice cream cone pattern on the other side of the structure by noticing similarities and differences in the shapes and sizes of the blocks. Lily also creates a pattern as she constructs the border of her block structure. This is evident when she states, "We need big", as she repeats a pattern of squares and rectangles.

11.5-Scientific Problem Solving

Children apply and adapt strategies to solve problems.

When Lily is unsuccessful at solving problems, ...she...experiments and adapts strategies.

When Ms. Gillette and Lily attempt to duplicate the ice cream cone block configuration on the other side of the block castle, Ms. Gillette chooses a block and puts it near the structure the opposite way than it will fit. Lily notices that it does not fit and chooses another block of the same shape. She suggests to Ms. Gillette that she could put the block in place facing the other way. When Ms. Gillette moves the block facing the opposite way, Lily slides her block into place, completing the base of the structure.

IQPPS

Curriculum: Essential Characteristics

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Responding to Children's Interests and Needs

3.12- Ms. Gillette uses her **knowledge of children's... interests, ideas, and skills to tailor learning opportunities for...individuals.**

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HSPS

1304.21(a)(4)(i) - During center time the classroom environment **promotes interaction and language use among children and between children and adults.**

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1304.21(c)(1)(ii) – Ms. Gillette **provides for the development of cognitive skills by encouraging each child to...understand concepts, and to develop age appropriate...reasoning, problem solving and decision-making skills which form a foundation for school readiness and later school success.**

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HSCOF

Science

Scientific Skills and Methods

- Begins to participate in simple investigations to test observations, discuss and draw conclusions and form generalizations.
- Begins to describe predictions, explanations and generalizations based on past experiences.

Social and Emotional Development

Cooperation

- Develops increasing abilities to give and take in interactions; to take turns in games or using materials; and to interact without being overly submissive or directive.

Social Relationships

- Demonstrates increasing comfort in talking with and accepting guidance and directions from a range of familiar adults

Approaches to Learning

Initiative and Curiosity

- Chooses to participate in an increasing variety of tasks and activities
- Approaches tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination and inventiveness.

Engagement and Persistence

- Grows in abilities to persist in and complete a variety of tasks, activities, projects and experiences

Reasoning and Problem Solving

- Develops increasing ability to find more than one solution to a question, task or problem.

Physical Health and Development

Fine Motor Skills

- Grows in hand eye coordination in building with blocks, putting together puzzles, reproducing shapes and patterns, stringing beads and using scissors.