

**The Center for Young Children
University of Maryland, College Park**

Curriculum Statement

Philosophy by firsthand explorations of their world. The idea that children experience intellectual growth by making

- The driving force of each study is inquiry and investigation. Teachers often begin a study with an experience that will bring out what the children already know about the topic. Children will draw, talk and write about the topic.
- During this process it becomes evident what children want to know about the topic. The children will then research through observation, experimentation and investigation. As information is gathered, the class is recording information on charts and graphs and discussing the topic in large and small group meetings.
- In the end there is a cumulative experience that summarizes the knowledge gained in the study. Each study has its own unique cumulative project that will show what the children learned through the investigation of a Real World Study

Example: A Four-Year-Old Baby Study

- The children make a list of all the things they already know about babies.
- Children bring in baby pictures of themselves and talk about them to the group.
- Children draw pictures of their earliest memories.
- They discuss all of the things they want to know about babies and the teacher and children together make a list. The teacher uses questioning regarding initial consonants and sight word recognition as she writes the list.
- They decide to pose their questions to grown-ups. The class invites a series of parents with infants to come to the class to show their babies and answer questions. The families represent a range of ethnic backgrounds. The children come up with a list of questions to ask the parents. The babies spend time in the room so the children can observe their behavior.
- The children record the data they collect about babies in a manner that extends their mathematical thinking. The children make a graph to show what they learned these babies can do. They sort baby toys and clothing onto a real graph.
- They interview a teacher or parent who is expecting a baby.
- They taste baby formula and mashed bananas and record their likes and dislikes.
- They measure their feet with Unifix cubes and compare the size with the size of a newborn's feet.
- A display is made in the classroom with children's current and baby pictures and signatures.
- In the dramatic play area children use baby dolls to explore ideas about babies.
- They read and recite nursery rhymes at group meeting times. They read books and stories about babies.
- At the end of their study they make a class book to show all they learned.

Maryland State Voluntary Content Standards

Political Science (4) Identify

Much of the learning in the contents areas is a result of the in-depth studies as described above. In addition, the structure of the preschool and kindergarten day provides ample time for children's self-selected activities, a structural element in our curriculum that we call Work Time.

- Work time is for self-chosen work in the areas described content areas explained below. Decision making skills are developed as children work on self-initiated projects.
- Problem-solving skills are developed as children work together and negotiate space, materials and ideas.
- Long periods of each day are devoted to Work Time and children learn time management skills.
- As children choose work spaces in the classroom, teachers follow the children and engage with them individually and in small groups. The concept of scaffolding comes into play in these interactions at work time. Teachers can take children to another level in their thinking and skill levels by working with them in this individualized manner.

We consider this work time to be an essential and important component of our program at the CYC. The classroom becomes the children's workshop, with essential materials, space, and time and teacher encouragement at their disposal.

Below is a description of the philosophy and methods of teaching and learning in the content areas of

confirming that the child'

- Blocks also can be utilized as an effective tool for reflection on aspects of their world children are learning about. For example, after a class trip to the playground, a group of children think about what they have experienced by building a playground in the block area.
- Teachers and children discuss their structures during Work Time. Children develop their speaking skills as they describe and explain their work with blocks. They use scientific, mathematical and architectural terms.

Dramatic Play Content Area Domain

- Another area of the classroom where children can recreate their life experiences is dramatic play. The tools of dramatic play are large hollow blocks, dress-up clothes, household props and open-ended materials such as fabric pieces and carpet squares.
- In dramatic play situations children recreate their environment through which they clarify their ideas about their world. Young children blend reality, fantasy and imagination to gain an understanding of new information and accommodate the new with the old.
- In dramatic play children can take on a role and see how it feels to be in control of an experience. They can assume the role of another and do what that person does.
- In play, children externalize their thoughts and emotions making them available.

Our goal at the CYC is to develop in our children a style of learning that makes them deep and serious thinkers. Along the way they will learn all of the skills and information they need to excel in our society. They will learn how to read, write and spell. They will learn how to do arithmetic and read a map. And along with knowing these things they will also know how to do research and investigate. They will have confidence in their abilities to use resources. They will be clear thinkers, knowing how to get to the root of a problem and asking the right questions in order to efficiently problem solve.

We are very excited about the work the children do at the CYC. Teachers facilitate as children think, do and reflect. In all areas of the curriculum the children are guided in their efforts to understand their world and be a part of a caring learning community.