



Using Summer Months Effectively

Summer is here! We can all relate to the change of pace that takes place over the summer months. Teachers often feel eager about using these months to get the classroom ready for the fall, when classrooms typically have new children, but without a plan may find themselves unprepared when September arrives. The following is a list of useful tips and ideas designed to help you use the summer months effectively to prepare your classroom for quality....

Classroom Arrangement and Organization

1. If you are re-arranging for a new class, refer to the Environment Rating Scales and your curriculum books. Consider space, noise, and pathways when designing the layout of your classroom. (ECERS- 3 items 1 to 6, ITERS-R items 1 to 5, FCCERS-R items 1 to 6)
2. Assess, declutter and re-organize the materials in your classroom – fix or remove damaged or incomplete materials, make fresh labels for materials with words and pictures, let children get creative with all of the tiny bits of art scraps you have been saving all year!

☆ *Enlisting the help of children in classroom reorganization, based on their age and ability, can support learning math and language in a fun way!*



Planning for Curriculum Implementation

1. Use storage containers to organize materials for topics of study – when the time comes, pull out the container and voila – you have everything you need in one place.
2. Use your curriculum books to create a workable daily schedule, and prepare a tool kit of ideas and strategies to ensure smooth transitions.

Getting to Know Children and Families

1. Effective transition planning techniques such as inviting families to your center or conducting a home visit (GNJK 2.4.5, 3.3.4 and 3.4.4) can help to familiarize yourself with any new children that will be joining your classroom.
2. Learn about home languages and culture of new families, and prepare your classroom with material to represent each child's experiences, such as family pictures hung at child's eye level, culturally diverse play materials and posters of different cultures and abilities. (ECERS-3 item 26, ITERS-R and FCCERS-R item 24)

☆ *Ask parents for donations that represent the children's life, such as family photos, dress up clothing, household items, and books in their home language.*

Useful resources:

<http://www.environments.com/community/landing.aspx?campaignid=1993>

<http://www.communityplaythings.com/inspiration/room-layout>

<http://classroom.4teachers.org/>

Individualizing Activities in a Mixed-Age Setting

Planning structured activities for mixed aged groups, as are typical in Family Child Care and centers that run summer camps, may be challenging, especially when there is a range of abilities and interests. How can one activity meet the needs of all? The answer to this lies in customizing the experience to each child's developmental level. Provide a wide variety of materials, design an environment that lets children experiment, create and discover, and scaffold learning with guidance from the teacher. Let's take art, for instance.

In a painting activity:

Infants can experience finger painting while sitting in a high chair, caregiver's lap or while lying down on their tummies. Potential benefits of this activity include:

- cause and effect when they see their fingers making prints on the paper
- tactile & sensory skills from touching and feeling paint on their skin and in between fingers
- fine motor development, as finger painting strengthens the finger and small hand muscles
- language development, through adults use of words such as *wet*, *squishy*, *cold*, *goopy* and connecting them to the experience

Individualizing the group painting activity for **Toddlers** can be as simple as allowing them to paint with their toes as well as fingers and adding some music so that they can move their feet to the rhythm of the music. Adding other items, such as sponges, feathers, leaves or any materials that spark their creativity, based on the developmental levels, can further enrich the learning experience. Benefits for toddlers include:

- build strength in the arms, hands, legs, and feet
- practice hand and finger control, which helps improve writing skills
- improved coordination
- explore senses, especially sight and touch
- language development as they interact with the caregiver and other children during the activity

Preschoolers and **School-Aged** children may be more interested in creating art that represents a real or imaginary object or scene. To individualize for this age group, try varying the brush size, providing easels, and adding a variety of paint colors, containers with water, and items to create texture, like pieces of tissue paper or fabric. Benefits include:

- improved hand-eye coordination and increased fine motor control
- language and social skills as they interact with peers and caregiver
- greater awareness of colors, textures, shapes, lines, and forms
- an opportunity to express their creativity

<https://www.education.com/reference/article/value-art-preschool-children/>

<http://articles.extension.org/pages/25680/creative-art-helps-children-develop-across-many-domains>



Benefits of Interactions Between Older & Younger Children

While same age grouping makes it easier for teachers to plan lessons, activities and schedules, mixed age grouping has its share of benefits. Interactions between younger and older children in mixed age settings such as family child care settings, provide advantages in several developmental areas.

☆ *Centers that follow same age grouping can give their children these benefits by planning activities and projects that allow for occasional mixing of classrooms.*

For younger children, the benefits are:

- increased collaborative social play instead of parallel play because the older children in the group model the skills required for such play
- natural scaffolding of literacy and math skills resulting from the more advanced play engaged in by older kids
- improved social emotional skills such as self-regulation, turn taking, awareness of self and other peer interaction as older children take on the role of the teacher

For older children, the benefits are:

- natural opportunity to develop leadership and nurturing skills as they guide younger children in the interactions
- improved understanding of literacy and math concepts through the process of teaching the younger children
- increased pro-social skills such as empathy, relationship management and reduced bullying
- greater creativity and innovation as they modify the interactions to make them more appropriate for younger children



References

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/files/attachments/1195/ajp-age-mixing-published.pdf>
<https://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9212/mixed.htm>



“A Teacher’s Perspective on Learning During the Summer”

An interview between Vasu Nacha (Senior TAS at PCA-NJ)
and

Anne Luchenta (Teacher at Kiddie Academy of Marlboro)



[Click here or on the photo to listen to the interview.](#)

Save the Date for these Upcoming Opportunities!



Webinars, *Open to all GNJK programs*

Date	Time	Topic	Presenter	Description
6/30/17	12-1pm	Lesson Planning for the Early Childhood Professional: who, what where, when, how, and mostly why?	Grow NJ Kids TA Center North Region	Participants will better understand and integrate the components of an effective lesson plan, how to incorporate curriculum goals and objectives into their daily planning, and how to utilize the NJ Birth to Three and Preschool Standards to plan for intentional teaching and research-based skills development.

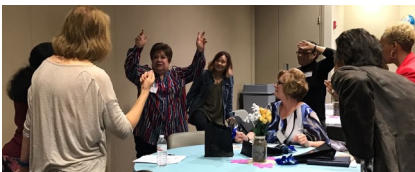


GNJK Peer Learning Communities (PLCs), *County Specific*

Date	Time	Location	County
6/19/17	12-2pm	North Bergen Library, Kennedy Branch	Hudson
6/19/17	12-2pm	Learning Resource Center, East Orange	Essex
6/27/17	1-3pm	Childcare Resources, Neptune	Monmouth/Ocean
6/28/17	1-3pm	Millhill Child & Family Development, Trenton	Mercer
8/9/17	1:30-3:30pm	Children's Center for Learning, South Amboy	Middlesex/Somerset



Thank you to all who attended our Networking Meetings in both the Central and Northeast Regions! They were such a success thanks to your participation! Everyone walked away motivated, inspired, and with a new friend!



*Central Region
Networking Meeting 5/31/17*



*Northeast Region
Networking Meeting 6/1/17*

CONGRATULATIONS!

The following programs have received...

4 STAR RATINGS



The Goddard School

Toms River, Ocean County

Acelero Learning

Perth Amboy, Middlesex County



**Prevent Child Abuse
New Jersey™**



PCA-NJ operates a broad range of preventative services designed to support the improvement and quality of professional workforces and programming, resulting in significant positive impacts on family functioning and health in all 21 counties. **PCA-NJ programs include:**

- ◆ Grow NJ Kids TAC
- ◆ Healthy Families
- ◆ Parents as Teachers
- ◆ Parent Linking Program
- ◆ Enough Abuse
- ◆ Middlesex County Council for Young Children
- ◆ Human Trafficking Prevention
- ◆ Essex Pregnancy & Parenting Connection
- ◆ Parent Education & Technical Assistance
- ◆ The Period of Purple Crying

Central Region TA Center 103 Church Street, Suite 210 New Brunswick, NJ 08901 732.246.8060

Northeast Region TA Center 550 Broad Street, Suite 1105 Newark, NJ 07102 973.371.5301

<https://www.preventchildabusenj.org/growtac>