

## Curriculum Plan for Preschool, ages 3-6

12 weeks per semester; 24 weeks per year

90 minutes each week results in 36 hours of instruction per year, or 144 hours in 4 years. It typically takes at least 200 hours of instruction to achieve a minimal functional proficiency level with students ages 12 and older. We do not yet know how much can be accomplished in 144 hours, ages 3-6.

### Goals:

- **Language**
- **Literacy**
- **Math concepts and reasoning**
- **Social Skills**
- **Learning with all five senses**
- **Culture**

### Language

Communicative Functions/Language in Use (involving both initiating and reacting

- Socializing
  - Using different modes of address
  - Greeting
  - Introducing
  - Thanking
- Exchanging information
  - Identifying
  - Asking for/giving information
  - Describing
  - Narrating personal experiences
  - Inquiring about or expressing knowledge
  - Inquiring about or expressing opinions
  - Asking for/giving permission
  - Stating necessity and need
  - Inquiring about or expressing likes/dislikes/preferences
  - Inquiring about or expressing wishes

- Getting things done
  - Requesting
  - Suggesting
  - Making arrangements
  - Reacting to offers, requests, suggestions
  - Inviting
  - Instructing
- Expressing attitudes
  - Admiration
  - Approval/disapproval
  - Interest/disinterest
  - Friendship
  - Regret
  - Apology
- Organizing and maintaining communication
  - Attracting attention
  - Expressing lack of comprehension
  - Asking for repetition or rephrasing
  - Asking how to say something in the target language
  - Asking how to spell something mentioned
  - Asking someone to explain what they just said

### **Literacy (Essential components of preschool literacy)**

- Oral Language
- Phonological Awareness; words, syllables, onset-Rime, phonemes
- Alphabet Knowledge; letter names, letter sound associations
- Print Awareness
  - Recognizing print in the environment
  - Understanding that print carries meaning
  - Concepts of print
  - Knowing that print is used for many purposes
  - Experiencing print through writing

### **Math concepts and reasoning**

- Numbers and operations
- Geometry (shapes, spatial relationships)
- Measurement
- Data

### **Social Skills**

- Large group, small group, inclusion
- Turn-taking
- Sharing
- Listening (attending to)

### **Learning with all five senses; with multiple intelligences**

- Listening, smelling, touching/feeling, seeing, tasting
- Verbal, mathematical-logical, musical, spatial-artistic, naturalist, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal

### **Overarching questions:**

- **Who am I?**
- **Who speaks this language?**
- **How can I use this language that I am learning?**

### **Learner Characteristics:**

Preschool children are in a sensitive period for language development. They absorb languages effortlessly and are adept imitators of speech sounds. They are very self-centered and do not work well in groups. They respond best to activities and learning situations relating to their own interests and experiences. Although they have a short attention span, they have great patience for repetition of the same activity or game. They respond well to concrete experiences and to large-motor involvement in language learning.

For a 1 hour class, 10 to 15 different activities would be appropriate. Our classes average about 70 minutes in length (plus the opening and closing routines with the whole school), so will routinely include at least 15 activities, many which are repeated one week to the next with additions and embellishments as language development progresses.



### **Parent's role**

If the youngest children (3 yr) are not comfortable attending alone, then it may be advantageous for the caregiver to accompany the child in class. The adult must agree to attend as a participant/role model and not as a translator/teacher. The adult serves as the child's partner in play, echoing or modeling the language being used. The adult must agree that the class is a time for fun, for experimentation and making mistakes, and help the teacher create an atmosphere of 'trying things out'. Language and activities learned in class can continue at home. Parents must understand that language learning happens in incremental steps over the long-term. A child often demonstrates comprehension, cultural sensitivity, and important communication skills long before they are able to speak in sentences, and language production should not be forced.

### **References**

Helena Curtain and Carol Ann Dahlberg, Languages and Children, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Pearson. 2010.

"Starting Young: Best Practices for Ages 0-6". Jackie Friedman Mighdoll, *Learning Languages*, Vol. XIII, Number 2, Spring 2008. Pp.6-8