

Teaching As Leadership For Early Childhood

Sophia Pappas' Story

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Introduction

These are the stories of Sophia Pappas' experience in her second year teaching pre-Kindergarten in Newark during the 2005-06 school year. They were developed from Sophia's own recollections, class records, and student work. We have tried to be as faithful as possible to her and her students' experiences, and Sophia was deeply involved in reviewing the written transcription of her many hours of interviews. Sophia also provided all materials in the toolkit.

While Sophia is in many ways a model teacher, her experiences represent only one of many pre-K teaching styles and approaches and are not meant to convey the "one true way" to successfully teach young children. Rather, Sophia's experience represent an exploration of one teacher's embodiment of the Teaching As Leadership principles that Teach For America has found lead to significant academic gains for students in under-resourced schools. We hope that new corps members will find reading about Sophia's methods helpful as one of many pieces of information they use to construct their own successful classrooms.

Preparing to Teach Pre-Kindergarten

“Pre-K,” Sophia’s Program Director said. The assignment seemed exciting and scary.

“Pre-K? Four-year olds?” Sophia thought. In only a few short months she would be the very first teacher for fourteen young students. After several deep breaths and a very excited phone call to her best friend, she was ready to get to work.

Sophia felt the pressure of her placement immediately. She knew that a solid pre-K education could quite literally change her students’ lives. Sophia had read the studies: children who attend pre-K are less likely to drop out of *high school*, and they have lower rates of teen pregnancy and delinquency. She also knew that the achievement gap that plagues America’s children begins very early in life. One-half of the black-white test score gap evident at the end of high school is already apparent at the start of school. In addition, children from low-income households are exposed to far fewer vocabulary words (650 words per hour for children on public assistance compared with 2,150 words per hour for children from high income households), a statistic that has serious implications for their reading and writing skills.

No time is as precious or as fleeting as the first years of formal schooling. Research consistently shows that children who get off to a good start in reading rarely stumble. Those who fall behind tend to stay behind for the rest of their academic lives.

Source: Burns, S. M., Griffin, P., & Snow, C. E. (Eds.). “Starting out right: A guide to promoting children’s reading success.” Washington, DC: National Academy Press. 1999.

Those statistics were all too real for Sophia’s children. As early as pre-K, poor and minority students in inner city New Jersey lag behind their wealthier peers. Teaching pre-K was an opportunity to level the playing field from the start. Sophia was eager for this challenge.

Sophia’s first step was to visit a model kindergarten classroom to discover what her children should be doing by the end of the year. The Teach For America office in Newark arranged for Sophia to visit Lindsay Clark, a Teach For America corps member who was also a district-wide model teacher of kindergarten.

Ms. Clark’s classroom, absolutely bustling with five-year-old students, was nonetheless a serious learning environment. Her young students worked independently, freeing their teacher to facilitate learning with select groups. Had Sophia not seen these young children clamoring through books or cooperating during learning activities, she would not have believed that it was possible to have such a student-driven kindergarten class.

As an emerging pre-K teacher, Sophia had questions. How did Lindsay get her students and her classroom to this point? What were the deficits that Lindsay’s students were facing academically that Sophia should address in her own students to better prepare them for kindergarten?

From her observations, conversations, and additional reading, Sophia discovered the importance of **playtime** and of **socializing students to a classroom environment** during the pre-K year. For most of Sophia’s students, pre-K would be their first exposure to a school environment and their first chance to play with children other than siblings. This meant that her classroom environment would set the stage for how her students and many of their families would feel about school and learning. By creating a fun, challenging, safe and welcoming space, Sophia would positively impact her students’ views of school for the upcoming years.

Five Areas of Child Development

In 1990, the President and 50 state Governors established National Education Goals, the first of which was that "by the year 2000 all children in America will start school ready to learn." In the ensuing years, this Goal has been colloquially dubbed the "Readiness" Goal and has generated considerable public policy debate at the local, state, and federal levels. While the U.S. failed to meet the readiness goal, it and its related objectives were a breakthrough for early childhood development because they acknowledged for the first time that narrowly constructed, academically-driven definitions of readiness needed to be broadened to incorporate physical, social, and emotional well-being. The goal and its objectives also affirmed the connection between early development and learning and children's later success in school and in life.

The five dimensions of early learning and development embraced by the panel include:

1. **Language** – Verbal language, including listening, speaking, and vocabulary; emerging literacy, including print awareness (following text from left to right, return sweep, reading left page and then right, understanding that text conveys a message), phonics (assigning sounds to letter combinations), story sense (recognizing story elements), and writing process (representing ideas through drawing, letter-like shapes, or letters).
2. **Cognition and general knowledge** – Understanding of shapes and spatial relationships; knowledge of social conventions; and knowledge derived from looking across objects, events, or people for similarities, differences, and associations.
3. **Approaches toward learning** – Enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence in completing tasks.
4. **Physical well-being and motor development** – General health and growth; gross and fine motor skills; and the absence of unattended physical conditions or exposure to toxic substances.
5. **Social and emotional** – Ability to interact socially, take turns and cooperate; positive sense of self-worth and ability; and the ability to express and interpret feelings.

Sources: National Education Goals, Goal One Technical Planning Group. 1993. <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/AchGoal1/goal1.html>, accessed 4/14/06.

School Readiness Briefing Paper Three, State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network, <http://www.finebynine.org/pdf/Briefing%20Paper%203.pdf>, accessed 4/14/06.

Pre-K is also an important vehicle for developing students' **social skills** like self-control, sharing, conflict resolution, honesty, independence, and even the patience necessary to navigate a structured learning environment. Knowing that a number of students in Newark were placed in Special Education because of behavioral rather than academic problems, Sophia took her role in building students' social abilities very seriously.

Her preparations also showed her the importance of developing **independent learning skills** in her students. If Sophia was truly successful with her students, she knew that they would be leaving her classroom with the self-directed learning skills that would allow their kindergarten teacher to focus primarily on academic material.

Lindsay explained that her students were behind in some of the most **basic literacy skills**: identifying letters, recognizing letter sounds and even understanding how to hold and read a book properly (a skill that New Jersey standards call "print awareness"). These are among the most fundamental building blocks of literacy. As a pre-K teacher, Sophia would need to address these foundational elements of literacy so that her students could enter kindergarten ready to learn to read.

Before Sophia began the process of examining her own district's curriculum and benchmarks and setting concrete goals for her class, she wanted to visit a prestigious school to see what pre-K looked like for high income students in New Jersey. Again, the Teach For America office directed her to an exemplary classroom, this time in the well-resourced community of Montclair.

Almost immediately Sophia noticed the strong focus on **critical thinking skills**. Sophia had thought seriously about all the basic literacy pieces her students would need but she also realized, looking at the students in Montclair, that great readers and writers were great

thinkers. They made connections from the books they read to other books and to their own lives. They asked meaningful questions about the stories. They understood not only how to write but the important function of writing in their everyday activities. Imparting these skills to her students, in addition to foundational literacy, would be necessary to provide them with an education that was truly on par with their higher income peers.

Armed with this broad vision of where her students needed to be by the end of their pre-K year, Sophia was ready to dive into the nitty-gritty.

Big Goals

On a hot August day, Sophia huddled in her poorly air-conditioned apartment, poring over a stack of diagnostics, benchmarks, and end-of year-assessments she had gathered from the district office. She examined her curriculum and started to calculate what assessment scores her students would need to obtain by the end of the year to be “**more than ready for kindergarten**,” a vision that would drive all her instructional decisions.

The most obvious goal was that students would need to make benchmark, i.e. achieve end-of-year pre-K mastery level, on all their literacy standards. In Newark, students who achieved benchmark could recognize 16+ letters, were able to write 8+ words, achieved at least an 8 out of 9 on the print awareness assessment, and achieved at least 15 out of 18 on the phonological awareness assessment.

Pre-K Social Skills

Developing appropriate social skills in children is a primary function of a pre-K classroom. Houston Achievement Place (HAP), a non-profit that provides training programs for early elementary teachers, defines social skills in terms of six core building block skills:

1. Paying attention
2. Listening
3. Looking at the person talking
4. Following Instructions
5. Accepting Feedback
6. Accepting no as an answer

Source:
<http://www.projectclass.org/whatispc/socialskills.htm>, accessed 5/11/06

School Readiness – in its simplest terms

The Child Trends school readiness indicator looks at four skills. The ability to:

1. recognize letters;
2. count to 20 or higher;
3. write his or her name; and
4. read or pretend to read.

Source:

<http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/indicators/7EarlySchoolReadiness.cfm>, accessed 4/14/06

Because social skill development is also an important function of early childhood education, Sophia knew that she needed to set measurable goals for her students' ability to function properly in a classroom environment. She wanted her students to be independent learners, she wanted them to be supportive classmates, she wanted them to be able to mediate their own conflicts, and she wanted them to be able to express their thoughts and emotions with words. In order for these social/emotional goals to be meaningful, Sophia forced herself to quantify them into measurable student outcomes that she could track. These outcomes included being able to resolve actual classroom conflicts with “I” statements that expressed their feelings and being able to mediate conflicts without her interference. Sophia would collect written anecdotal data on her students' ability or inability to demonstrate these skills as a way to track their social development throughout the year. She would also

provide extra behavioral instruction to students who scored poorly on these measures.

After two days of careful planning and reflection, Sophia finalized her Big Goals on a large poster that would hang above her desk.

*****Big Goals*****

Students Will Be Able To...

Write 10 Word Wall words in five minutes.

Reach mastery of all Literacy standards for pre-k.

Solve a peer conflict using "I" statements.

Express anger, sadness, or frustration in a calm/peaceful way.

Setting up the Classroom

Three weeks before the academic year started, Sophia stepped into her school for the first time. Each summer the rooms are stripped and scrubbed, leaving the classroom walls bare and the hallway cluttered with tall blockades of toys, games, chairs, and books. As she steered herself through the maze of disassembled classrooms, stepping over a toy wooden stove and box of colorful blocks, she entered her room for the first time.

Sophia's classroom design would be critically important to her success as a teacher. She knew that her set-up had to facilitate play that would socialize her students to the classroom environment and build their literacy skills. Creating effective play centers was key. Students in pre-K are encouraged to choose their own activities during much of the day. Sophia intended to pack her classroom with learning-rich experiences so that students would have a plethora of choice, all of which would build their literacy, math, and social skills. With this in mind, Sophia scanned the room and began to mentally create her blueprint.

Sophia wanted to fit eleven learning centers into her room: writing, library, computers, discovery (science), art, toys and games, blocks, dramatic play, cooking, music and movement, and sand and water. Her first considerations were largely logistical. She asked herself, "What would be the most productive and safest set-up?" Surveying the raw physical layout, she asked herself, "Where are all the outlets? How should the placement of the sink and the windows influence my room set-up?"

Once Sophia felt like she had accounted for all of the room's quirks in her evolving classroom design, she started to think about how to arrange the room so that "quiet areas" and "noisy areas" were separate.

Sophia put the quiet centers on one half of the room, the writing center in the front corner (so she could monitor it most closely) and the library in the back (where students would have the most privacy) along with her computers. The remaining centers, all likely to facilitate loud play among the students, spanned the opposite wall. In the center of the room she placed tables that would frequently be co-opted into workspace for the art, cooking or discovery centers. Students would also use the tables during meals and small group instruction.

With her centers sectioned off by furniture and short bookshelves, Sophia spent the next two days hauling in materials and categorizing them into their proper area. The wooden stove went into dramatic play, the smocks and paintbrushes into art, colorful blocks sat in large crates in the block center and a stack of plant pots waited to be filled in discovery.

Two days later, Sophia collapsed into a miniature desk chair, relieved to have placed the last piece of classroom “equipment” into her room—a small basket of animal puppets for the dramatic play theater. Scanning the room, Sophia pulled her chair up to the short table, leaned over her too-tall knees and surveyed her Action Plan, scribbling the room’s inadequacies into the margins. As she scratched her center set-up off her list, one major item still yelled from the page: Print-Rich Environment.

By the end of the year, Sophia’s students would need to be able to recognize their letters, understand the concepts and purposes of print and reading, and write some words on their own. By filling the room with accessible writing—low enough for a four-year to see—Sophia could give her students the opportunity to begin developing these skills throughout their daily routine.

The next day, Sophia began filling her room with print. She set up her “Word Wall” by hanging all of the letters of the alphabet in her writing center. Under each letter, Sophia and her class would hang some of the small common words that appear most frequently in speech (often known as “sight words”). She also hung a poster of the alphabet with large illustrations of objects whose names start with each letter. Sophia also ensured that writing was present in all of her other learning centers by labeling everything—the furniture, play areas, and storage bins. And in her head, she planned the labels and new pieces of writing she and her students would add together as the year proceeded.

Despite its straightforward nature, Sophia learned from observing great teachers that labeling effectively is a challenging task. She knew that any literacy tool, like a label, would be most effective if it helped her students’ connect pictures to text and explained how print operates (from left to right). Every label started with a different colored first letter, indicating to the students where they should start reading, and had a picture attached.

Of course, Sophia’s efforts to integrate pre-literacy skill development into each center went beyond labels. One of her major goals was that her students leave pre-K with a strong understanding of how they use reading and writing in everyday activities. To accomplish this, Sophia made sure that every center had a mini-library with topical books and authentic print materials, such as phone books and newspapers, as well as a variety of writing materials that could be integrated into play.

Later in the year, Sophia would frequently find ways to encourage her students to use the writing materials. If students in the dramatic play center were planning a trip to the grocery store, she would suggest that they make a list. If students were beginning to build something in the blocks center, she would encourage them to use the paper, like “good architects,” and plan what they would build. Even if her students were still struggling with letter formation and scribbling illegibly on the paper, this practice showed them the functional importance of writing in their lives.

As important as it was for Sophia to incorporate literacy into her play centers, she was also intent on building a strong writing center and library where students would be excited to practice these skills exclusively. Unlike her other centers, the writing center was not specifically listed in **Creative Curriculum for Preschool**, the flexible curriculum guide her district used for pre-K classrooms. Sophia decided to add one in order to put her students on a more advanced academic path.

Sophia’s Book Recommendations for Pre-K

Meaningful Print: Creating an Environment with Print Rich Experiences

→concrete strategies for getting your room ready for early readers

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 4th Edition

→general overview of developmentally appropriate practices and an unscripted pre-k curriculum

The First Days of School (Wong)

→Effective management strategies in any classroom, but useful for pre-k too!

Sophia's Tips on Room Supplies

The State of New Jersey

Low-income preschool teachers in NJ receive about \$5,000 each year to spend on materials in the classroom. Sophia used this money to purchase toys and books to augment her classroom.

Neighborhood, family, and friends

Sophia also looked to her community for resources and she got creative. Local delis, hardware stores, dollar stores, and restaurants provided her with funds and materials (e.g. she purchased gallon jugs to build igloos and explore volume; keys, locks, and screws to explore home building; different sized cardboard boxes for building mini-neighborhoods). Sophia befriended all of her contributors, and was sure to send a thank you note from her and her students.

Grants

Sophia talked to her regional development director and navigated the Teach For America website for grants from foundations and local businesses. She was careful to research and follow the grant writing guidelines for each organization.

Sophia's Must Haves

- Plenty of high quality children's books
- Different kinds of writing utensils, paper (including cards and envelopes for mailing) for all areas
- Art supplies
- Labels that will stick to furniture (i.e. white stick on labels covered with clear packing tape)
- Magnetic letters
- Small whiteboards (preferably magnetic ones)
- Pennies, nickels, and dimes
- Diverse (in terms of cultural background and occupations) dolls for the dramatic play center
- Diverse clothing for the dramatic play center
- Musical instruments (bought or handmade)
- Blocks (many different shapes and kinds)
- Table toys (manipulatives)
- Smocks
- Print materials for all areas (e.g., cook books, telephone books, books about transportation, construction, art, color, science, and more)
- A CD player
- Dr. Jean CDs ("Sing to Learn" is great for literacy building) http://www.drjean.org/html/cds_f/cds_friends.html
- A diverse collection of CDs (e.g., classical, rock, folk, motown, jazz, etc.)
- Clorox wipes
- Napping mats or cots
- Extra sheets for nap time

Sophia wanted her writing center to be just as engaging and playful as any of the other play areas so she packed it with chalk boards, erasable white boards, papers, pencils and fancy pens. The shelves had alphabet books, letter puzzles, magnet letters and each student's personal journal. All of these materials were nestled in a cozy alcove with an alley-like entrance and loads of cozy seating. Entering the writing center would be an adventure for students.

By the entrance to her room, Sophia posted a sign that said, "What's the buzz in 114?" She hung a series of welcoming announcements for families in a location that would catch their eye as they dropped off their children on the first day. She also set up a Family Lending Library in this space. On the first day of school, Sophia would give each family a library card they could use to borrow books, CDs, and other resources from her classroom. This area was designed to regularly inform parents about the classroom community and provide information that would facilitate further participation in their child's learning. There was a sign-up sheet for classroom visits, information sheets about working with children to improve their literacy skills, and books parents could read with their children at home. Sophia placed students' coat cubbies nearby so parents could not miss it.

Sophia also set up the carpeted area of the library as a cozy space for the class to meet in the morning and at the end the day. Sophia had not received her official roster yet, but she placed fourteen pieces of blank tape in a semi-circle around the carpet to indicate to her students where they might sit, ensuring that each would have a clear sight line to the board. By the end of the first two weeks, she would write the name of each of her students on each piece of tape. Taping students' names to the floor allowed them practice recognizing their names in print, a primary literacy building technique that Sophia used throughout the year. The tape names also gave each student ownership of a piece of their collective space and helped resolve disagreements.

Sophia finished off her room by hanging a number of charts and tools that would facilitate students' routines and independence. She hung a schedule and a behavior chart. She set-up an attendance system, which would require students to sign-in (and practice writing). She also hung an attendance board at the front of the room where, upon arrival, each student would find their name cards in a pocket and velcro them to the board under the appropriate letter. Finally, she created a system at each center to limit the number of students who could participate at any given time. Students would be asked to put their name cards in a box when they entered the center or to choose a different center if the box was full. This would allow students to choose how to spend their time while also ensuring that students were evenly distributed around the room.

At the end of the three weeks, Sophia stared, pleased at her emerging classroom. It was carefully organized, print rich, strategically designed for functionality and safety, and packed with opportunities for literacy and writing practice. It was also colorful, enticing and child sized so students could easily reach the classroom materials and independently explore. At 8:25 a.m. tomorrow it would get its first test run of the year as students poured in with their parents. Sophia was ready.

See the Toolkit (p. 1) ✕ for a **Diagram of Sophia's Classroom**.

The Students Arrive...

While anxiously waiting for her class to arrive, Sophia kept her goals for the day at the forefront of her mind. She knew that it would be easy to get caught up in the small disruptions that would frequently ensue in the first six hours in a room of four-year-olds. But ultimately, her most important job was to have students and their parents leave her classroom feeling comfortable, safe, and welcomed. She would constantly remind herself of this goal throughout the day.

Sophia's philosophy for day one was to over prepare *and* prepare to be flexible. She believed that being prepared to move students around, to burst into song or to quickly change activities would be the key to a smooth first day. She also tried to plan ahead for even the most basic logistical issues that might arise. Who would deal with the situation if a child wet himself? What would she do if a child started crying in the middle of a group activity? How would she respond to destructive behavior?

When planning her first day, Sophia solicited a great deal of advice from her classroom aide who had spent many more days in a pre-K classroom than Sophia. Investing her aide in the classroom plan was critical to building a relationship that would allow the classroom to function seamlessly as the year progressed.

Despite all her planning, Sophia braced herself for a rough first morning. At her school, pre-K students were the last to be delivered to their classroom on the first day. As the clock ticked past 9:00 a.m., Sophia found herself listening to the older children fill the school, waiting for her own students to finally arrive.

At 9:30 a.m., Tamyra and her father were the first to walk through the door of room 114. Tamyra was well dressed, quiet and a bit intense-looking as she clung to her dad's leg. Unlike many of the other parents, Tamyra's dad was relatively calm and even eager to drop his daughter off for the first day of school. Tamyra's older sister was now in the second grade so her dad was quite familiar with the first-day routine and excited about the buzz he'd heard about Sophia from students in her class last year.

"We're so eager to have Tamyra start school this year Ms. Pappas!" Tamyra's father said, gently peeling Tamyra off of his leg and walking the girl toward the cubbies. "Tamyra's mother and I try to read to her all the time and she's such a bright girl." He helped Tamyra hang her fall jacket.

"Well, I'm sure she'll do great in this class Mr..." Sophia said, forgetting his name in the excitement of her first student's arrival.

"Lee, Mr. Lee." He responded eagerly shaking her hand.

Sophia crouched down to Tamyra's level. "Welcome to school Tamyra, I'm so excited to have you in my class." Tamyra smiled shyly, turning to her dad for reassurance and Sophia continued, "We're going to have several more boys and girls join us, but do you want to color for a while until everyone arrives?" Sophia gently directed Tamyra to the table with simple coloring materials on it.

With her dad's encouragement, Tamyra ventured to the table and began drawing. Sophia chose coloring because she needed a simple activity that would require little explanation and create little mess to occupy her new students while she welcomed and reassured their parents. She wanted an activity that they could complete successfully and entirely on their own. Sophia also knew that even placing her students in the library that morning without guidance might be too much for her young students, many of whom had never handled a book. Coloring was an easy choice and like all activities that first day, she chose it for its strategic functionality and alignment with the day's goals, making her students feel welcome and keeping them safe.

As Sophia began to give Mr. Lee a tour of the classroom, other children began to arrive. Sophia found that Mr. Lee's calm demeanor contrasted with the anxious presence of most the other student's family members. Many of her new students also seemed nervous. It was, after all, their first time in a classroom. At times the room seemed to swell with crying as children clung to their family members. Sophia tried to be comforting to the families, thinking of the anxiety they were naturally feeling leaving their children with a complete stranger for the first time.

She knew that building trust with families had to start with her first interactions. Sophia expressed how excited she was to work with their children and emphasized the important role she wanted them to play in her classroom. She was sure to tell each family that she had an open door and loved having guests participate in her classroom. She gave family members a letter that welcomed and oriented them to her classroom and a homework folder that students would take home every day with assignments. She showed each family their child's cubby and gave them a brief tour of the bulletin board for announcements and the "Family Lending Library." Finally, Sophia gave family members space to ask her questions, and say goodbye to their child.

See the **Toolkit** (pp. 2-9) ✖ for the **Classroom Letter** and resources Sophia gives families on the first day.

When the last parent finally left, Sophia found herself surveying a chaotic group of four-year olds. They were a motley crew. Some colored rapidly in broad strokes, unaware of the other children and their new environment. Others lingered around the table, wary of engaging in the new activity. Still others sobbed in the corners. Notably, none of the children were reacting to or interacting with one another. Sophia began to look around and take in each student. Tamyra was coloring intently, her dress still tidy despite the messy thrusts of marker that covered her paper. Duante, with his long dreadlocks and an outfit that gaped over his small frame, sniffled close to the door, apart from the group. His similarity to his older brother was striking.

Terrel sat at the table, staring blankly at the wall. As he turned, scanning the room, Sophia was struck by the number of teeth missing from his mouth and the array of metal fillings that caught the light.

The complete lack of chatter between the students who were, for the most part, shell shocked by the new environment created an eerie quiet in the room. Sophia was somewhat startled by an ecstatic voice that rang out.

“Look what I did Ms. Pappas!” Keisha exclaimed, holding up her picture.

Sophia smiled warmly as the proud girl held up her picture. After Sophia’s initial discussion with Keisha’s grandmother, Sophia was not surprised by her boastful confidence. Her grandmother had been excited for Keisha to participate in class, responding enthusiastically to the list of activities they would engage in that year. Sophia would quickly learn that Keisha’s grandparents regularly tutored her at home, and their supportive praise of each of Keisha’s accomplishments made her a confident student who expected almost constant reinforcement. Keisha was advanced academically but had to work on her social skills.

In total, there were ten children in Sophia’s room the first day. (Her roster would swell to fourteen by the end of the week). That morning, the only item on Sophia’s agenda was getting her students to the rug where she would teach them her expectations for how to sit and participate. Sophia knew that getting her new students accustomed to classroom procedures and expectations would take time, and it was important to prioritize one aspect of her classroom on that first day while conveying only the essential expectations in all other areas.

Morning Meeting, which would take place on the rug, would be the cornerstone of Sophia’s classroom instruction and culture-building. It was critical that she acclimate her students to this space from day one. Using the “The Sitting Song,” she started off by meticulously teaching her students how they would sit on the rug. “My hands and feet are folded/My back is straight and tall/My eyes are on my teacher/ I make no noise at all.”

Throughout the day, Sophia would provide careful, step-by-step explanations of every instruction or routine she introduced, from sitting down to hand washing, in order to maximize the possibility of these routines going smoothly when enacted by a group of four-year-olds.

Although the morning time was productive and welcoming it was also filled with outbursts and disruptions. Despite Sophia’s immediate introduction of the “Bathroom Procedure,” Keisha wet her dress only 10 minutes into class. By lunchtime, her aide had taken care of three bathroom emergencies. Sophia also contended with a great deal of crying. Tyrone and Duante seemed plagued by the sniffles and at one point Keisha’s crying was so loud that Sophia offered her a seat on the couch in the cozy writing center.

Despite the numerous disruptions, Sophia persevered and nearly completed her plans for the morning lesson. Then, fifteen minutes from the end, Sophia was caught off guard as Duante began to cry out for his mother and suddenly ran out the door of Sophia’s classroom and down the hall. In all her planning, Sophia had not devised a contingency for a student leaving her classroom. With her aide busy changing a student’s wet clothing and no other adult in the room, Sophia knew that she could not go after Duante herself and abandon the other four-year-olds in her care. Instead, she called a security guard to find the boy.

When Duante returned to her room, Sophia pulled the small boy aside and explained that, while it was ok to be upset and to sit separately from the group until he was calm, leaving the classroom was unacceptable. While Sophia did not explain her full system of rules and consequences at this time, she gently explained what was and was not acceptable behavior in the classroom.

Sophia filled the remainder of the day with simple activities that did not require her students to share, a skill many of them needed to acquire. She read a story out loud and asked her students to draw pictures of themselves, an activity that allowed Sophia to get to know them a little better. She also gave them a tour of the classroom, showing off many of the exciting materials that they would use once she opened the centers. She modeled how they might interact with these materials by talking on the phone in dramatic play and by engaging the puppets in her puppet theater. She did not, however, let them use the centers just yet.

Sophia's students went through the day wary of their new surroundings and each other, but also excited by the classroom and the many toys that filled the room. Even after being together for several hours, Sophia's students spoke very little with one another and mostly directed their questions toward her. The day went largely without incident because Sophia chose only simple activities such as reading, playing with toys, listening to a read-aloud, or singing.

Sophia ended the day by gathering her students on the rug once again and asking them to share what they learned.

"I learned a song!" Sophia modeled for her students.

"I liked the stove in the kitchen." Keisha shared, not following the modeled answer, but expressing her enthusiasm for the dramatic play center.

"I liked the book." Tyrone added, recalling the story Sophia read to the class.

The other students remained quiet, but Sophia was pleased she had engaged a few in active sharing on only the first day. "Alright boys and girls, that was a great day. When I call your name, please get up from the rug and sit quietly at a desk chair. Your families will arrive soon."

And as the first day ended, she eagerly greeted the children's families sharing a positive story with each child's guardian.

See the **Toolkit** (p. 10) ✕ for a copy of **Sophia's Weekly Schedule**.

Completing the Roster

Over the next week, several more students joined Sophia's class, including one named Shawn who the school nurse had described cryptically as a "rough-looking" boy. Shawn entered Sophia's room shy and with an angry snarl that seemed permanently affixed to his face. His clothes were oversized and worn and his braids appeared unkempt. In a quivering voice, Shawn's mom apologized for their late arrival, explaining that they had been living temporarily at a shelter while she searched for work and a more permanent residence.

Sophia knew that poverty and homelessness would present significant challenges for Shawn's academic growth. Still, Sophia believed that if she worked closely with Shawn and his mother, he would succeed academically. Sophia resolved to do all she could to ensure that Shawn would learn in her classroom.

The last addition to Sophia's classroom, Shantell, presented challenges that were far more severe.

“Should I stay for the morning?” Shantell’s mom asked when she dropped her child off for the first time. “She’s never been on her own this many hours.”

Shantell entered Sophia’s room in her mother’s arms, a small girl with thick-rimmed glasses and a neat dress that would be wet with urine only a few hours later. Although she had a brother, Shantell was clearly the baby of the family and her mother was hesitant to leave her for her first day of school. Sophia assured Shantell’s mother that she was welcome anytime but also that Shantell would be just fine for the day.

Sophia managed to comfort Shantell’s mom and coax the girl from her mother’s arms after a few tense moments. Shantell was wide-eyed and hesitant so Sophia took it upon herself to enthusiastically offer her a tour of the classroom while the other children finished their breakfasts or scanned books quietly in the library, waiting for morning meeting to begin.

Shantell was shy and unresponsive during the classroom tour. Although she made a few soft grunting sounds, she seemed to be entirely non-verbal. Because shyness and unresponsiveness are common among pre-K students on their first days, Sophia did not know how much to worry.

The remainder of the day went relatively smoothly. In the afternoon, Sophia’s aide, Ms. Franklin, worked with Shantell to catch her up with the other students.

“Ms. Pappas, I don’t think Shantell can speak,” Ms. Franklin whispered softly as Sophia walked past. There Shantell stood, her new outfit wet for the second time that day, looking back and forth at the two adults and making low guttural noises. “She’s been unable to respond with even a yes or no to simple questions,” Ms. Franklin continued.

With no success, Sophia attempted to engage Shantell in conversation as the more pressing need to change Shantell’s outfit once again took over. Sophia made a note to ask Shantell’s mother about her daughter’s speech skills.

When Shantell’s mother arrived to pick her up, Sophia gently broached the subject. “Shantell did very well today, but she seemed a little shy. Is that typical of how she is at home?”

“Well, Shantell is definitely a quiet girl,” her mother responded.

“This may be a strange question,” Sophia probed further, “but Shantell didn’t seem to be able to verbalize beyond quiet grunts. Does she usually say more?”

“Oh no, Ms. Pappas. Shantell doesn’t speak yet but the doctor said that she will when she’s ready.” Shantell’s mother responded rather matter-of-factly as though her child’s complete lack of verbal skills was a relatively normal situation. Sophia was surprised.

Recent research reports show that nationally less than 2 percent of children receive early intervention services during the first three years of their life, and less than five percent during the preschool years. However, 5.5 million children are identified as having a disability that interferes with their ability to learn in school and that requires special education services...Enrollment in a preschool program is a wonderful learning opportunity for all stakeholders: adults, children with special needs, and children with typical needs. Concerns about a child’s growth and development often surface for the first time in preschool. Therefore, preschool teachers need to be able to identify and articulate concerns, partner with parents to gather more information, and figure out the next steps for the child with special needs and his or her family while continuing to work with the child in the classroom.”

Source: Maria Benejan, Director, Center for Universal Pre-K, Bank Street College of Education, Universal Pre-K Newsflash, February 2003, <http://www.bankstreet.edu/qems/upk/upknewsflash6.pdf>, accessed 5/16/06.

"Well, again, Shantell did do very, very well today," Sophia began, eager to ensure that she maintain some positive ground with this young mother, "but I wonder if we should get some experts at the school to sit down with her. Just to check things out. It couldn't hurt."

"All right," Shantell's mother agreed, generally un-phased by the situation. "C'mon Shantell," she swept her baby up once again, carrying Shantell's soiled clothing and the day's assignments in her homework folder in her one free hand.

Music as an Instructional and Management Tool

"There is a friend who's in our class and Jamar is his name-o, J-a-m-a-r..." Sophia and her class sang together at the end of morning meeting to the tune of "Bingo," spelling out each child's name around the circle before dismissing them to line-up. This name song was the last in a series of five songs they sang throughout morning meeting. Sophia opened the meeting with "The More we Get Together," to reward them for assuming the proper seating position. She followed with "Five Monkeys Jumping on a Bed" to give her students practice counting down from five to zero. The class then sang "Where is Thumpkin?" replacing "Thumpkin" with the letter A and changing the words of the song to practice the phonological /a/ sound. And Sophia initiated "The Wheels on the Bus" as she moved the morning message easel and set up a chair for read-aloud.

Sophia's Recommended List of Songs and Fingerplays for the First Few Weeks

- "Where is Thumpkin?"
- "The Muffin Man"
- "The Wheels on the Bus"
- "Five Monkeys Jumping on a Bed"
- "The Itsy Bitsy Spider"
- "Little Miss Muffit" - also great for transitioning students from the rug to the tables
- "The More We Get Together"
- "The Mulberry Bush" - you can change the lyrics to be themed related (e.g., "This is the way we sit on the rug"; or "This is the way we greet our friends")
- You can also access a collection of nursery rhymes at <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/Rhymes.html>

Music as a Teaching Tool

Music is a great way to engage young children because it is a natural and enjoyable part of their everyday lives. We often hear children creating their own songs and incorporating music into their play. Music is a socially engaging way to learn, and especially appropriate for the developmental levels of young children.

Music helps many children break information down into easily remembered pieces or associate it with previously known information. Teachers can also pair singing with movement or visual aids that stimulate the senses. This allows children to not only hear the music, but also feel and move to the rhythms, and see, touch, and play the instruments. Singing also offers lots of opportunities to teach new words to young children. By taking familiar songs and changing or adding words, teachers can introduce new vocabulary in a way that makes it easy for children to follow along. Music supports self-expression, cooperative play, creativity, emotional well being, and development of social, cognitive, communication, and motor skills. Music and singing are a fun and effective way to help young children learn.

Excerpted from *Singing as a Teaching Tool*, National Association for the Education of Young Children, <http://www.naeyc.org/ece/2004/01.asp>.

On any given day, Sophia and her students sing up to fifteen different songs. Students sing as they transition between activities, they sing to practice math, rhyming, phonological awareness, spelling, and letter identification. Sophia also bursts into song to keep them engaged during long instructional periods like morning meeting.

Sophia purposefully plans to use songs and instruments as an instructional strategy and a classroom management technique. For example, Sophia taps on a Bongo drum to create a rhythmic flow that facilitates her students' smooth and speedy transitions between activities.

She also uses songs to teach rhyming (e.g., “Where is Thumpkin?” replacing Thumpkin with each letter and then saying, “What do you say A? What do you say A? /a/, /a/, /a/, /a/, /a/, /a/”) and letter identification (e.g., “There is a friend whose in our class and Jamar is his name-o, J-a-m-a-r”). She has found that many of her students can remember things more easily when they are put to music.

Sophia has found that songs are particularly helpful in teaching math (e.g., “One potato, two potato”), the alphabet, the days of the week, and the months of the year. For Sophia’s students, songs can help them retain knowledge and strengthen their basic literacy and math skills.

Family Involvement

“This is my dad. He’s real smart. He reads with me every night,” Gistead said as she introduced her father, Mr. Lee, to the class. It was the last Friday of their first topic study unit, which explored families. Sophia’s class was celebrating the culmination of their unit with a special “Family Show and Tell” during which each student could bring in a family member. Some brought several! Keisha brought her proud grandmother. Duarte’s older brother ducked out of his own 2nd grade class for the celebration. Tyrone’s mom sat in one of the small chairs awaiting her turn to be “shown” to the class as well.

Sophia knew that in order to maximize her students’ academic growth, she had to invest her students’ families in their success. She knew it was critical for families of young children to read, talk, and respond to their children at home to bolster classroom learning. Sophia also realized that she had a special opportunity to establish—for the first time—expectations for family involvement in school. And she knew if she did her job well, her students’ family members would feel deeply involved and empowered, and would demand the same throughout their children’s education.

She knew it wouldn’t be easy. Her students’ families had many competing obligations, including jobs and other children. Sophia planned to use heavy doses of positive reinforcement to show her students’ family members all of their children’s achievements and the important role that they play in their child’s learning. She would also strive to accommodate their schedules so that they could participate in her classroom at their convenience. And she would keep families updated regularly on their children’s progress and provide concrete activities they could use to help their children develop.

Sophia had a number of strategies to encourage family involvement in her classroom:

1. **Open door policy**—From the first to the last day of school, Sophia maintains an open invitation to families to discuss their child’s progress, play with the class, share something special from home, read to the class, or just to observe. She lets families know she is flexible, so even if they decide to visit at the last minute, they are welcome.
2. **Individual Progress Reports**--Sophia makes sure to inform families regularly of their child’s progress using work samples and photographs to show off their accomplishments. When families see that their child is valued and that Sophia makes a concerted effort to track their progress, Sophia finds they are more likely to get involved.
3. **Special Celebrations**--Early in the year, Sophia’s class explores “families” during a two-week topic study that culminates with a special “Family Show and Tell.” She also has a “Giving Thanks” party close to Thanksgiving, during which the class gives thanks to their families by preparing food, serving them, and singing for them.

4. **Family Library**--Each family receives a library card on the first day of school, and Sophia displays photos of students and their families, prominently on the family board at the entrance of her classroom. For every five books a family member takes out and brings back, their child receives a free book.

5. **Individualized Action Plans**--Sophia prepares detailed accounts of each child's progress along with a list of things she plans to do and a list of things families can do. These joint action plans convey their shared responsibility for the continued growth of their child. Sophia makes sure to model the strategies she suggests (e.g., writing a grocery list with their child or pointing out the print on street signs as they walk home from school) and to ask parents for a progress report and suggestions.

Independent Conflict Resolution

"Tamyra took the doll out of Dramatic Play and into Blocks and she's not supposed to!" Keisha pulled on Sophia's sleeve, tattling on her friend.

Sophia sighed, "Did you tell Tattle Bear?"

Like many children in pre-K, Keisha was fond of tattling on her peers. After a brief snuggle and conversation with tattle bear—a stuffed toy who sat on a small chair in Sophia's classroom—Keisha padded back to speak with Sophia.

"Tattle Bear says Tamyra is being bad and you should punish her," Keisha pressed.

"No, Tattle Bear doesn't speak, he only listens," said Sophia. Keisha's face contorted for a moment but then she left Sophia to continue whispering in the bear's ear.

Being Explicit when Teaching Social Skills

Great early childhood teachers are explicit when they teach social skills. KIPP: SHINE Prep, a high performing early childhood charter school in Houston, for example, contracts with the Houston Achievement Project (HAP), to teach children to pay attention, listen, look at the person talking, follow instructions, accept feedback, and accept no as an answer. HAP's method teaches children to look people in the eye, nod, and immediately change their behavior. KIPP: SHINE Prep also empowers children to reinforce the social skills lessons they have learned in their interactions with one another. "Please honor me," you'll hear a child say to another who is not listening to her.

Source:

<http://www.projectclass.org/whatispc/socialskills.htm>, accessed 4/16/06

Sophia's classroom goals included making her students into independent problem solvers. In a class of fourteen students, Sophia strived not to be the sole mediator of conflict. She tried to give her students the tools they needed to resolve their own problems and disagreements. Tattle Bear was one technique Sophia developed to help chronic tattlers who mostly needed an ear to listen to their concerns. While Sophia was initially skeptical that sending her students to speak to a stuffed bear would curb their tattling behavior, she found that the bear actually met students' most basic need to be listened to and easily appeased them.

Sophia felt strongly that making her students adept at working together in a classroom setting was essential to their future success so she also wanted to give them the tools to resolve more complex interpersonal conflicts. Sophia tried to give her students the words to express their feelings of hurt, anger, or sadness that often followed accidents in the classroom. Through explanation, modeling, and frequent practice, she hoped that students would be able to talk out their feelings and resolve conflicts peacefully.

“What makes an action hurtful to others is in how it makes them feel. If you do something by accident that makes someone sad, just say, “It was an accident, I apologize,” Sophia told her students. “If someone does something to you, you should tell them how it makes you feel and allow them to respond. For example, I might say, ‘I feel sad when you hit me.’ We all have accidents. That doesn’t make us good or bad. It’s important just to use our words,” explained Sophia.

Sophia had to regularly re-teach the language of conflict-resolution, but she found that her students learned to adopt it. Sophia frequently heard Tyrone’s voice ringing out with, “I apologize, it was an accident,” or “I feel sad because you took my block,” or “It’s ok, I can share.” His frequent use of I statements and his genuine empathy for others showed Tyrone’s progress in acquiring appropriate social skills.

Keisha continued to struggle with her social skills. “Duante hit me, Ms. Pappas!” she yelled across the room. Keisha and Duante were standing elbow-to-elbow, briskly whisking meringues, so Sophia was fairly sure this was an accident. Still she saw a teachable moment. As she rushed over to help, Sophia was relieved to see that crying had not started.

“Did you tell him how you feel?” Sophia asked.

An important lesson to draw from the entire literature on successful early interventions is that it is the social skills and motivation of the child that are more easily altered... These social and emotional skills affect performance in school and in the workplace. We too often have a bias toward believing that only cognitive skills are of fundamental importance to success in life.

**James Heckman, PhD
Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences 2000**

“I feel angry because you hit me!” Keisha scolded fiercely.

Duante sat silently and defensively. It had only been an accident but Keisha’s tone of blame made him seethe. “What do you want to say to Keisha?” Sophia questioned.

Sophia prodded him with some gentle advice: “I might say, I apologize Keisha. It was an accident. I didn’t mean to hit you.”

Duante repeated her words softly and Keisha pounced. “I can’t hear you!”

Sophia took this opportunity to step in and ease the blow. “Could you speak up a little Duante so Keisha can hear you?”

“It was an accident, Keisha. I apologize.” He repeated.

“Do you forgive him Keisha? Is Duante your friend again?” Sophia asked.

“Yes,” Keisha replied hugging Duante tightly.

As the two children resumed their cooking together, Sophia was pleased the conflict had been resolved successfully. Still, Sophia made a note to herself to work more closely with Keisha to develop her conflict-resolution skills so that she could begin to mediate entirely on her own.

Reflection Questions I:

1. What skills do *you* think are important for young children to develop in order to be “more than ready for school?”
2. Brainstorm for a minute about how you will approach setting up your classroom. What considerations were important to Sophia? What might be your priorities and guiding principles? What impact might different choices have on student learning?
3. What concrete steps might you take to invest your classroom aide in your plans for the year?
4. How can you approach your young students and their families (in terms of tone, rules, and systems) to foster a highly supportive and motivating classroom culture?
5. What do you expect a classroom of four-year-olds to look like on the first day of school? What unexpected challenges did Sophia face on her first day? How might you approach similar situations? What additional challenges might present themselves during this time and how might you handle those situations?
6. What techniques did Sophia use to encourage her students to successfully resolve their conflicts? How might you approach conflict resolution in order to maximize instructional time?

Diagnostics

Keisha and Sophia sat quietly staring at a large poster of the alphabet for the third time that week when Sophia decided that Curiosity Cat, a puppet Sophia often used to facilitate instruction in her class, might be a useful tool in encouraging Keisha to respond to the letter identification diagnostic. They were approaching the end of September and Sophia grimaced at the thought of dragging out diagnostic testing into October. Every day since mid-September, Sophia pulled some students aside during choice time to administer diagnostics. Despite her loud and boisterous personality, Keisha had a strong propensity for clamming up in these one-on-one interactions. Sophia knew that students who were reluctant to interact with an adult would frequently open up to a puppet character like Curiosity.

“Hi Keisha, how are you feeling?” Curiosity inquired.

“Fine,” the young girl responded hesitantly.

“I feel happy. I was wondering if you’d be a good friend and play a game with me. I’m going to point to a letter on this alphabet, and you say it.” Keisha gazed hesitantly at the written letters and Curiosity pointed to the C. “You know who likes this game? Dora likes it.” Sophia was willing to exploit Keisha’s love of Dora the Explorer if it would give her an accurate read of Keisha’s letter identification skills.

“S,” she whispered.

“Good job. I really like doing this” Curiosity responded. Sophia was sure to praise students on their participation for every answer on the diagnostic exercises, attempting to keep her tone level and not indicate whether their response was correct or incorrect. When Keisha’s interest began to wane, 10 letters from the end, Sophia had to innovate.

Sophia's Best Practices for Pre-K Diagnostic Testing

→**Flexibility is crucial:** 1. Lay out more than enough time for administering the tests especially in the beginning of the school year; 2. Be mindful of and responsive to changing student moods. If a student is frustrated it's okay to test them another day; 3. Be prepared to change the setting and approach of your one-on-one testing—the more comfortable the child is, the better. (e.g. switch to a different place in the room, use a puppet or, administer the test quietly while other students nap.

→**Know your Students:** Take student interests and moods into account when testing children. If, for example, three children are shy, do not schedule them for the same day, as they will each take longer to test. Consider keeping a list of children's interests so that you are able to use devices, such as puppets or toys, that will appeal to the students.

→**Students not being Tested:** Make sure children know how to play independently in at least two centers before beginning the tests.

→**The Role of Your Teaching Assistant:** Prepare your aide to supervise the other children during testing by explaining exactly when and where the tests will be administered.

→**Setting:** Choose a quiet place that is away from the other children. If necessary, limit the other children to the quieter centers while administering the test.

→**Tone:** Keep an even tone throughout the testing so as not to lead students to a particular answer or to discourage them. Sophia usually says, "good job" after each answer in the same tone, regardless of whether the child's response was right or wrong. Do not take confidence for granted, even among enthusiastic four year olds. Use praise to keep students motivated.

→ **All Fun & Games:** Approach the students as if assessments are a game. This is especially important because the students who are not being tested will be playing. If the student being assessed decides the assessment is boring, they will start to think about the fun their classmates are having, and stop focusing on producing accurate answers. Sophia tries to make assessments special and fun by saying something like, "Would you like to play a new and exciting game with me? It is so much fun. We have to come over here."

→**Be organized:** As with everything else, organization and efficiency is crucial during testing. Make sure everything is in order before beginning the assessment. Try not to waste time finding a child's tracking sheet or the next item in the test. Sophia tapes a checklist with the children's names on it to each test's folder. All of the folders are in a large assessment binder that also includes a separate folder of class summary sheets.

"This is so much fun Keisha, why don't we take turns?" Sophia pulled out her number poster and placed it on the table above the alphabet. "I'll point to a letter and you tell me what it is. And then you point to a number and I'll tell you!" This new game was sufficient to lull Keisha into completing the exercise. Unfortunately, given Keisha's normally advanced ability to identify letters during the morning meeting and choice time, Sophia had reason to doubt that her low score of 1 on the Letter identification diagnostic was an accurate read of Keisha's skills.

Diagnostic information is invaluable to Sophia in gauging students' prior knowledge and allowing her to set up a rough long-term plan and create groupings for small group instruction. However, administering diagnostic exams at the beginning of the year, when students have barely acclimated to their new environment was always extremely challenging. Sophia developed a number of "best practices" to maximize her results.

Sophia reminded herself that accuracy is the most important outcome. She knew she had to maintain a friendly and non-threatening tone at all times. She also had to be patient and make the process fun. And finally, she had to stop if a child appeared ill at ease as this situation would probably not result in a reliable measure of their skills.

In the first week of tests, Sophia identified one low performing student after another. Sitting with Tyrone, Sophia realized she had one more to add to the list. Pointing at a "P" Sophia asked, "What's this?"

"Flower," Tyrone replied.

"What sound do you hear in the word dog, Tyrone?"

"Woof."

"No the word dog, /d/-/d/-/d/, dog," she stuttered.

"Woof."

Phonological awareness was difficult for the majority of Sophia's students at the beginning of the year. They were unfamiliar with the concepts of rhyming and beginning sounds and she often wondered if they even understood what she was asking, despite her efforts to model the skill for them.

But in the midst of her second week of administering diagnostics, Sophia tested the student she suspected would be her first reader. Tamyra held a book expertly, tracking the pictures and print as Sophia read along. Perhaps most surprisingly, she knew beginning sounds and rhyming. In a class where not one student showed a glimmer of phonemic awareness, Tamyra was approaching benchmark. The one tense moment arose 13 letters into the test when Tamyra's eyes seemed to brim with tears as she stared at the b on the page, complaining, "My daddy didn't teach me that letter."

"That's ok Tamyra, look at how many letters you've identified so far. You'll be reading in no time!" And after assessing her high diagnostic scores, Sophia had no doubt that that was true.

Long-Term Plans

At the beginning of October, Sophia sat down with her students' diagnostic results and the pre-K curriculum standards. She was stunned by the work ahead of them. The vast majority of her students were in the lowest bracket of scores on letter identification and phonological awareness. On average they were able to identify only five to ten letters out of fifty-four symbols (including upper and lower case). Virtually none of her students could identify rhyming words or beginning sounds, the first steps to sounding out words and reading. Only Duante and Tamyra scored out of the bottom percentiles in these phonemic skills.

And then there was Shantell whose language skills were so under-developed that Sophia was unable to even administer the diagnostic exam. Although Sophia had begun the process to get Shantell tested for Special Education, the limited district staff for pre-K testing meant that Shantell could not get even an initial appointment with the child study team until December. By the end of September, Sophia discovered that Shantell's developmental delays extended far beyond speech. Shantell often had trouble following simple classroom directions or procedures including how to ask to go to the bathroom. She also struggled with traditional pre-K literacy activities because of her speech limitations. Sophia had to find innovative ways to meet Shantell's needs while engaging all the experts she could access at her school to assist her in this endeavor.

Despite the challenges facing her class—Terrel's persistent and debilitating shyness, Keisha's poor social skills, and Shawn's chronic absences—Sophia believed her students could make significant academic gains. But she needed to plan carefully.

In her calendar, Sophia began penciling in the year's learning objectives week by week, ensuring that she gave lots of time to the letter identification and phonological awareness skills her students seemed to struggle with those the most. Sophia dedicated approximately two weeks per month of small group time to phonological awareness, one week to letter identification and the fourth week to writing and concepts of print. She also started to form groups of similarly skilled students for small group instruction. She would shift the composition of these groups throughout the year based on students' academic progress and sometimes even on their distinct learning styles.

See the Toolkit (pp. 11-13) ✂ for an **Excerpt from Sophia's Long-Term Plan**.

Next she turned her attention to her daily schedule and began strategizing around her daily routines. She knew that for many of her students, more than half of their learning would occur not in formal group instruction but through the phonological and letter repetition she built in their daily life, from morning meeting to lining up for the bathroom to calling on students throughout the day's activities.

Literacy Routines

Sophia carefully designed ways to maximize instructional time, from the moment she greets her students at the door each morning.

At 8 a.m. on a morning in late September she was quickly taping paper to her clothing before her students arrived. On her back she placed a picture of a frog and a flower along with a giant F, the letter of the week. Above each knee Sophia stuck the words "I" and "am," the two sight words she would focus on with students that week. Around her neck she slung her color coded "My Time/Your Time" clock sign to indicate to the class a sense of urgency and remind them when it was their time to talk freely and when it was her time to direct whole group instruction. Even four-year-olds could understand that the more time of hers they took fooling around, the more of their playtime she took back for instruction. Sophia and Ms. Franklin had just finished laying out the breakfast trays on the front table when Duante walked in with his mother.

"Hello Duante, I'm so happy to see you this morning. How do you feel today?" Sophia greeted the boy.

"Extremely, super duper ecstatic!" Duante chimed back.

Sophia smiled, noting that students were starting to pick up on the advanced adjectives like 'ecstatic' that she would use to express her feelings each morning.

"Who is super duper ecstatic Duante? Is your mom ecstatic? Is Terrel ecstatic?" Sophia questioned, taking this opportunity to encourage her student to use a complete sentence and build his grammatical skills.

"No, /feel super duper ecstatic!" He replied.

"That's great Duante. Keisha told me that she is feeling /f/-/f/-/f/ fabulous today." Sophia responded, emphasizing the phonological sound of F, the letter they were working on that week. Why don't we sit down to breakfast with her and see what other F's we can find on our cartons?"

Following the daily routine, Duante attempted to write his name. Sophia noted that he was clearly able to form the Duan with only the t and e appearing as an illegible scribble. With such developed writing skills in late September, a time when several of her students still struggled to hold a pencil properly, Duante was definitely one of her more advanced students. As Duante walked himself to the table, Sophia scanned the sign-in chart, which gave her a daily indication of how her students' writing skills were developing.

Sophia, always conscious of opportunities to collect data that would track her students' development in literacy skills, pulled out her clipboard and wrote herself a note on Duante's writing. "September 30th. Forms the D-u-a-n in name at morning sign-in. t & e still scribbled. Print Awareness (3a), Writing (4)." In her anecdotal notes, Sophia always tried to capture a factual account of the student's actions as well as which skills on her evaluation rubric the actions fell under.

Scanning the rest of the sign-in list, she also noticed that Terrel's name was an entirely unreadable scribble with no clear letter formations. She was beginning to conclude that his writing skills were very poor, but she recognized that she had collected very little anecdotal data on his writing over the past month. Sophia quickly wrote a note on Terrel's tracking form, describing his writing on the sign-in sheet as well.

When she was finished writing notes about her students, a process that took all of two minutes, Sophia joined them at the table. "What are we eating this morning?" Sophia questioned, eager to use this time to begin discussing the letter of the day.

"/f/-/f/-/f/ Frosted Flakes!" Keisha exclaimed, anticipating Sophia's point. Sophia was not surprised, given Keisha's advanced phonological skills.

"And who knows what letter starts /f/-/f/-/f/ Frosted /f/-/f/-/f/ Flakes?" Sophia questioned her students as she dramatically turned her back to expose the letter of the week.

"F!" Frederico replied. Sophia smiled. On early diagnostics, Frederico appeared to have a lower skill level in letter identification but this was a clear example of how, with daily practice, he was grasping at least some of the letters in his name.

As her students finished their breakfasts, they trickled onto the rug and took a book from the library. Her students could not read the books, but they could practice their "print awareness" skills. With just a quick glance Sophia was able to get a fairly accurate read on her students' understanding of how print operates. While students like Tamyra and Duante held the book upright and carefully examined each

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

The term "developmentally appropriate practice" was pioneered by the National Association of Early Childhood Education (NAEYC) in a position paper written by Sue Bredekamp in 1987. In short, the phrase means children learn best when their teachers take into careful consideration what is known about child development and learning, the strengths, interests, abilities, and needs *of each individual child*, and the social and cultural contexts in which children live.

NAEYC's principles of child development and learning that inform developmentally appropriate practice include:

- Domains of children's development are closely related. Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains.
- Development occurs in a relatively ordered sequence, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired.
- Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child's functioning.
- Early experiences have both cumulative and delayed effects on individual child's development; optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning.
- Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them.
- Play is an important vehicle for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development.
- Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond their level of current mastery.
- Children learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically secure.

Excerpted from "Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age Eight," NAEYC, <http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/PSDAP98.PDF>, accessed 4/16/06.

picture, Terrel and Shawn would handle their books like directionless toys, holding them upside down and “reading” from the middle. That day, Sophia planned to sit with the two boys and quietly walk them through a book

Less than an hour into her day, each of Sophia’s students had already practiced their grammatical skills, writing skills, phonological awareness and ability to identify letters. She had also managed to fit in some differentiated instruction for a couple of her students while the others practiced print awareness on their own.

At 9:00 a.m., Sophia ushered her students to their positions on the carpet for the morning meeting with a countdown from ten. Once they had all arrived on the carpet, the “Sitting Song” commenced. “My hands and feet are folded. My back is straight and tall. My eyes are on my teacher. I make no noise at all.” Sophia’s students chimed in unison.

Then Sophia began her morning meeting with math skills. She counted the number of students on the rug, and the number of boys and the number of girls. She reviewed the daily schedule, talked about the weather and added a piece to the growing caterpillar whose segments marked the number of days Sophia’s students were in school. As a group, the class would also count the number of reward tickets they had acquired for sitting in their spot on the rug before she reached 1 in her countdown. Then she counted how many more they would need to reach ten and get a class prize. Because pre-K math skills include basics concepts like counting, understanding the concept of time, ability to read and understand patterns, identification of coins, and identification of patterns, Sophia easily incorporated them into her day. Sometimes Sophia would have her students line up in a sitting and standing pattern to go to the bathroom or have her students “eat to zero” during snack time by carefully laying out five raisins and counting down as they ate each one.

Once Sophia and her students practiced their morning math routines, she was ready to start the morning message to her class. Pointing to the word “I” and “am” that she had taped to her knees, Sophia began to address the class.

“I am ecstatic today class. Who wants to know why?” Hands shot up as Sophia turned to the board to write her morning message. “Hmm, I want to write a message, but what do I have to do to get started?” Sophia questioned her students. Once again, students raised their hands in the air, holding their fingers sideways and yelling out cheers of “indent!” Sophia got her students excited by going around to each child, slapping their “indent hand,” and responding back with “indent.”

After slapping Duante’s hand last, she placed her own hand on the board. “Five finger indent,” she said as she began to write, consciously dictating her writing process including her use of indents, capitalization, punctuation, and even reminding herself where to start on the page so that students were provided a clear model of how they should approach their own writing.

“Today I, wait a minute, where’s the word I, does anyone see it?” A few hands shoot up as Sophia reaches for the Go Around Cup, shaking the sticks and selecting one. “/t/-t/-t/” she stutters.

“Terrel!” the class exclaims.

“It could be Terrel but it’s actually, /t/-t/-t/...”

“Tyrone”

Instead of just saying students' names to bring them to the board, Sophia made a habit of always incorporating literacy practice. Sophia would either "stutter" the first letter sounds of her students' names, call out only the beginning letter, call out a word that rhymed with their name, or call out a word with the same beginning sound.

Sophia found that this practice quickly made all students familiar with the phonological beginning word sounds of their names and their classmate's names. Even students who generally struggled with rhyming and other phonological skills were often able to identify the beginning sounds of their friend's names after only a month or so. As the year progressed she knew that her students' abilities to, for example, sound out the /t/-/t/-/t/ sound in Tyrone's name and relate it to the letter T would help them determine the phonological sound and beginning letter of other words like "tiger" and "turtle." These simple routines, repeated daily, created an extremely strong foundation for literacy skills.

At the loud pronouncement of his name Tyrone shyly got off the rug and his friends in the class began to cheer, "You can do it, I know you can!" This encouraging cheer was one that Sophia regularly modeled for her students and asked them to yell out. By the end of September, it was a routine they had adopted without her prompting.

Although Sophia had just pointed to the "I" moments ago, Tyrone struggled to find it without her assistance. Sophia noted to herself that, despite his recent abilities to identify T in many words, due in large part to his frequent practice with and exposure to his name in print, he was still struggling with identifying most other letters.

Sophia continued, "Today I walked to school. A man on the street yelled, "Look out, there's a fly!" I ran from the fly. Then a woman said, "Look at the flower." It was a pretty flower. I picked the flower." After Sophia finished her message, she read it aloud for a second time along with her students.

"This week, we're going to learn a new letter, it begins /f/-/f/-/f/-flower and /f/-/f/-/f/-fly and /f/-/f/-/f/-floor." Sophia turned her back to reveal the F. "Can anyone tell me what the letter is?"

"F!" Duante, Tamyra and Keisha yelled, practically in unison.

"That's right! Now, let's all say the F sound. /f/-/f/-/f/..."

And as Sophia dismissed the class to the bathroom line at the door, using the F sound in place of the first sound in their name. "Fantell, Fuante, Famyra, Fyrone..."

See the Toolkit (pp. 14-15) ✂ for Sophia's "**Instructional Management System**" that incorporates literacy and math skills into her daily routines.

Balanced Literacy Instruction

Balanced literacy instruction in Sophia's class meant that at some point, each day, Sophia's students were engaging in modeled, shared, interactive, guided and independent reading and writing exercises. Modeled reading and writing most frequently took place in whole group instruction, whether it was Sophia writing the morning message or conducting a read-aloud to her class. During modeled literacy the most important skill Sophia tried to convey was the process of reading and writing. For example, she'd walk the class through her thinking process around where to start a sentence, how to indent, when to use capitalization and where to put her punctuation. Beyond simple mechanics, Sophia often modeled the phonological skills

that they might use to determine a letter if they got stuck. "I want to write 'to the store'," Sophia would say, "Hmm, I'm not sure what letter that starts with. Let's see, /t/-/t/-/t/, that sounds like, Tyrone. It must be a T!"

"Sight Words"

The 100 most common words make up about 50 percent of the material we read. Thus, students' literacy skills are significantly increased if they learn how to read and spell these words automatically in their first few years of schooling. Although mastering these words is often considered a goal in kindergarten and first grade classrooms, Sophia begins her students' exposure and practice of these site words in her Pre-K reading instruction and word wall writing challenge which tests her students' ability to write the weeks' sight words in five minutes.

See the **Toolkit** (pp. 16) ✂ for a list of the 100 most common "sight words."

In modeled reading, Sophia would talk to her class about where to start a book, and how to use the pictures to make predictions. She would focus students' attention on the print that told the story, "reminding herself" that it was the text, not the pictures, that she would be reading. Sophia would even trace her finger below the text to guide them through the process and remind her students that each time they got to the end of one page, they had to turn the page to continue the story.

Modeled reading was also a time when Sophia would work to develop her students' higher order comprehension skills. Great pre-K readers are able to summarize the plot points of the story they are reading. They are able to make predictions from the title, pictures and information they already knew about

the book. They make connections among different books and from books to their own lives. Sophia planned in advance the variety of comprehension questions she would ask, attempting to address all her students' different skill levels.

See the Toolkit (pp. 17-19) ✂ for a sample **Read-Aloud Transcript**.

Despite her strong phonological and letter identification skills, Keisha had poor listening skills and reading comprehension. She would often respond to Sophia's prompts with irrelevant information. Sophia might ask about a passage from a book, and Keisha would answer, "My grandmother took me to the store yesterday." Sophia knew that she needed to do a better job of engaging Keisha and modeling predictions.

During a reading of *Curious George*, Keisha showed growth. Duante had just summarized the action of the story, "Children were playing and a ball went flying. Oh no, there's a woman with a nice hat standing near the ball. The ball is flying toward her!" he had exclaimed.

"/k/-/k/-Keisha, what do you think will happen next?" Sophia asked. Keisha's attention span had lengthened, but Sophia could tell that she was not yet prepared to make a prediction. "Duante, can you remind Keisha of what's happening?" she said.

"The ball is going to the woman's hat!" Duante repeated.

Keisha stared at the picture and said, "I think George with help save the woman. George will hug her tight so the ball won't touch her!"

Sophia was pleased. This response showed significant growth both in listening and comprehension skills.

Shared and guided reading and shared, interactive, and guided writing were the next steps on the literacy continuum. In shared reading, Sophia would sit one-on-one with her students, taking turns reading words. In shared writing, Sophia would write while she and her student came up with the ideas together. In

interactive writing, Sophia and her student would “share the pen,” taking turns writing letters and words. Some days, Sophia would huddle with one student before morning meeting, sharing a pen and

brainstorming a list or taking turns writing the letters in a simple word. Other days, Sophia would read one-on-one with a student, encouraging them to sound out or pronounce all the sight words they came across. Shared reading and shared and interactive writing frequently resembled modeling with Sophia walking the student through her own process while encouraging his or her participation.

As students became stronger readers and writers, Sophia led them through guided practice. In guided practice, the students did most of the work and Sophia remained on-hand to offer correction and assistance. Sophia found that it was very important, but hard, to restrain herself from giving her students answers too readily. However, Sophia’s patience paid off, as students often provided correct or related answers with just ten extra seconds of “think time.”

Independent reading and writing was Sophia’s ultimate literacy goal for her students. Here again, Sophia was aware that great readers and writers would not only be able to read and write correctly, they would also have a deep understanding of the purpose of reading and writing in their daily lives. Sophia emphasized the purpose of reading and writing in the classroom from day one, long before her students had developed the technical skills to engage in these activities. She always made an effort to point out the text labels in the centers or written instructions around the room so her students gained a fundamental understanding of how text guides the world. Sophia also emphasized the utility of writing as a means of learning more about the subjects in which they were most interested, engaging her students in exciting news stories during breakfast or placing books around the room that were relevant to the current topic study.

Shawn had trouble grasping this concept. He frequently mimicked his friends’ writing with little comprehension of its purpose. But one day, Shawn approached Sophia wearing a police hat and badge. He scribbled on a pad of paper and handed it to her. On it, she could read the letters “T-I-K-T.”

“What’s this?” Sophia asked.

“You were speeding.” He answered.

“And what’s this piece of paper.”

“I’m the police. I’m giving you a ticket. When my mom speeds, the police make these.”

Balanced Literacy Block

Effective pre-K teachers teach reading and writing skills through a balanced literacy approach. At some point during every day, Sophia’s literacy instruction uses each part of a balanced literacy block which includes:

- Read Aloud,
- Shared Reading,
- Guided Reading,
- Independent Reading,
- Word Study, and
- Writing (shared, guided, modeled, interactive, and independent)

Every day throughout the year, teachers read to students during the **Read-Aloud**, read with students during **Shared Reading** and **Guided Reading**, and listen to and assess students’ reading during **Independent Reading**. During the **Word Study** portion of the balanced literacy block, teachers provide explicit and systematic instruction in the building blocks of literacy—book and print awareness, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics and the alphabetic principle, and word and structural analysis. Finally, teachers plan their **writing** instruction so that they model excellent writing for students, share the pen with students during Shared and Interactive Writing, and conference with students as they write independently.

Sophia, with a smile, recorded the anecdote on her clipboard noting his growth in letter Identification, print awareness, and writing.

Sophia found that her sight word writing challenge—ten words in five minutes—was an effective technique in encouraging students’ independent writing. As students mastered more and more of these words, they were better able to write on their own and fill out simple sentences.

Reflection Questions II:

1. How can you maximize time during your morning meeting to ensure both that students are constantly engaged and that each of your activities are meeting their individual needs?
2. Reflect on ways that you use writing in everyday life. How can you bring those authentic uses of writing into your daily instruction?

Centers and Choice Time

While Sophia’s students spend mornings, mealtimes, naptimes and read-alouds in a group setting, they spend the rest of the day in small group instruction and free-choice playtime in learning centers. Sophia learned early on that play is a developmentally appropriate practice for instructing four-year-olds and an important technique in facilitating their learning. For young children, play in “authentic environments” that allow them to explore different materials, mimic or play-act adult behaviors, understand how writing fits into daily-life activities, develop their language skills, and practice basic social skills is crucial to their development.

When set up and facilitated correctly, play in learning centers allows for collaboration and interaction with peers (according to research as much as 80% of children’s speaking occurs in the small groups that centers facilitate). During choice time, Sophia allows students to choose how they spend their playtime while still guiding the learning experiences students choose so that they are productive and meaningful.

Sophia has found that hands-on instructional methods that draw on students’ interests are essential for teaching pre-K students. Four-year-olds are far less likely to learn from “abstract” instructional experiences, like worksheets or lectures, than older children because they are not yet capable of processing detached experiences in ways that relate them to their interactions with the real world.

In other words, four-year-olds need to touch the pennies they are giving to a cashier in dramatic play to learn to count pennies. They need to write an architectural plan in the blocks center to understand the importance of print in their daily lives. They need to see light bend through a prism in the discovery center to understand the phenomena, and they need to assemble a sandwich in the cooking center to begin to understand the concept of a linear process and giving instructions.

Sophia understands that it is her role to instill lessons into play. It is common for Sophia to suggest that someone “take a message” for her when they are talking on the toy phone or “write a grocery list” when they are planning a play trip to the store. She practices rhyming animal names with a student playing with stuffed animals. And she encourages print awareness by asking her students to explain how they know where to put items away at the end of center time, pointing out the text labels on the bins.

Sophia also encourages her students to expand their horizons if they tend to choose one or two centers exclusively. She often highlights opportunities for her students' to explore their interests in new places. For example, Tyrone played frequently with cars in the blocks center so Sophia drew him to the exploration center with an activity that looked at cars and speed by racing small toy cars around a track. Then to the library where they read a book about cars. Keisha, who desperately needed to work on her social skills, frequently buried herself alone in the writing center. But, Sophia got Keisha to the dramatic play center by encouraging her to throw a party with Tamyra, knowing that Keisha often talks about throwing parties.

The choice involved in the free time is also important for students developing their social skills. By allowing students to make their own decisions about what they want to do, Sophia created an environment where (healthy) conflict is inevitable. Students often found themselves wanting to play with the same materials and had to decide whether to share or take turns. This made centers a prime time for building conflict resolution skills, self-control, and a positive attitude toward sharing.

Sophia also set up choice time to facilitate students' independence. Each center had a cardboard box with a number of smiley face stickers representing the number of students that can play in that center. Before center time begins, the "center manager" hands out students' name cards. Students place their name card in the box, outside of the center they wish to play in. It is the students' responsibility to count the number of cards already in the box to figure out if they can play in that center. This system allows students to regulate where they go and to leave any center during choice time and go to another if there is space. These independent learning skills will be crucial to success in the type of productive learning environment that Sophia witnessed in Lindsey Clark's kindergarten class.

Sophia also uses the first 10-15 minutes of choice time to pull students aside for targeted small group instruction. Although her district program, Creative Curriculum, does not encourage this type of organized instruction, Sophia believes that this augmentation is important to giving her students the differentiated instructional time they need. In order to facilitate this small group work, Sophia set up her room to allow easy supervision of all students while they were in centers. All her centers have low barriers and wide entrances so that Sophia has a clear line of sight into every area of her room. She can easily scan and supervise her students no matter where she stands. This was critical to the safety of her students and mandated by New Jersey standards for pre-K classrooms. Sophia also invested her aide in participating as an instructional leader and supervisor for students in the centers while she was teaching a small group of students.

Finally, because centers are such a crucial vehicle for student instruction, the materials in Sophia's centers are constantly evolving. Center time is often a chance for her students to explore the week's topic study. New materials are critical to this exploration. During her wind topic study, for example, Sophia introduced a number of new activities that allowed students to explore wind: wind instruments, scarves in her music and movement center, and small sail boats in sand and water. Every Monday Sophia gives her students a tour of all the new materials and activities she has added to the learning centers.

Data Collection and Tracking Student Performance

For Sophia, collecting revealing anecdotes about student performance is essential to planning purposefully. Sophia uses the Early Learning Assessment System (ELAS), which is mandated in all low-income districts in the state of New Jersey. This system asks teachers to collect a specific number of anecdotal tales on their students, a specific number of work samples, and a specific number of literacy prompts to track student performance on specific skills. Collecting all these "specifics" can be a confusing and arduous task so

Sophia is careful to set up effective systems that allow her to manage her daily data collection and long term planning processes.

As with many aspects of teaching pre-K, collecting anecdotes requires a balance of organized planning and flexibility. In an ideal world, Sophia would decide before each day began which children she would observe for anecdotal data. However, she has found the best data presents itself when she guides students to learning experiences and then makes herself available to watch for students who are growing or struggling with the key skills she wishes to assess. On any given day, some students display more valuable evidence than others. For example, on the day Keisha identified the /f/-/f/-/f/ in Frosted Flakes—level 3 phonological awareness in ELAS—it would have been poor practice to ignore that anecdote because it was Shawn’s day and not Keisha’s.

Sophia created a well-organized clipboard system to allow her to be ready to take anecdotal notes at any time. Clipped to the board is a notebook’s worth of paper with an easy-to-navigate tab for each student. The front page of each child’s section has a chart that tracks both the type of data she has collected (e.g. anecdote, work sample or literacy prompt) as well as what standards are covered by the data. Behind the chart, every student’s section has pages for anecdotal notes. Every time Sophia gets a new piece of data, she checks off the categories in this chart so she can easily track what she has and what she needs for every pupil in her class.

Sophia struggles to record what textbooks call “objectivity without inference.” That is, judgment-free anecdotes. Sophia came to understand “objectivity without inference” while observing Tamyra once during morning meeting. Tamyra was one of Sophia’s stronger students in letter identification and print awareness but she still struggled with phonological skills. One November morning, the class had just counted to two. Sophia shook the go-around cup and pulled /t/-/t/-/t/- Tamyra’s name. This meant Tamyra was to come up to the board. With students cheering, “You can do it, I know you can,” Tamyra quickly joined Sophia at the front of the class.

Sophia asked Tamyra to find the word “two” on the board, knowing that this question would stretch her abilities but also confident Tamyra could find the word. Tamyra quickly pointed to the “two” and gave herself “a kiss on the brain” as all Sophia’s students do when they arrive at the right answer or try hard. Sophia decided to push her harder.

She asked Tamyra, what other word starts with the /t/-/t/-/t/ sound. Barely missing a beat, she identified the word tooth. This was a learning leap for Tamyra and as she rejoined her peers on the rug, Sophia reached for her anecdote pad.

Immediately, Sophia found herself questioning. Was Tamyra displaying her letter identification skills or was this truly a phonological breakthrough? When Sophia found herself asking conscious questions about the anecdotes, she always paused; a likely sign that she was judging instead of reporting objective information. Sophia made a conscious effort to report the encounter. As one student left the rug to go to the bathroom, Sophia’s eyes followed him and something caught her attention. Right behind her was the “Tt”-word chart and displayed prominently was the word “tooth.” She recalled that she had drilled Tamyra just two days ago on the “Tt” chart as part of their letter identification practice.

Sophia realized that not only would her inferences have led her to incorrect conclusions about Tamyra’s skills, but also, the time she had taken to make those inferences distracted her from the keen observations she needed to be making to effectively capture this anecdote.

Sophia also learned that objective anecdotal data made conferences with other teachers and family members far more productive. In discussions with other teachers, Sophia found it most helpful to report exactly what a child said or did and then interpret the evidence as a group.

Finally, Sophia had read about the pitfalls of making snap inferences in a multicultural setting. For example, she knew a teacher might view a child who is not making eye contact as disrespectful or lying, when in fact the child's culture may indicate that not making eye contact with an adult is a sign of respect. Therefore teachers need objective notes so that they can reflect on the evidence and consult with others later for deeper interpretations.

See the Toolkit (pp. 20-22) ✂ for **Sample Anecdote** notes from Sophia's classroom.

Performance-Based Assessment

On a weekend in early December, Sophia sat at her kitchen table examining hefty stacks of student work and anecdotal notes. She had just completed the first three-month assessment period in her classroom and was now carefully re-diagnosing her students' academic levels, using students' diagnostic scores and the work samples she had collected over the past three months.

Sophia began with Shawn's work. She was disappointed but not surprised to see that his growth had been slow over this first assessment period. Shawn was still living in a homeless shelter and his attendance remained extremely spotty. Sophia was hopeful that things would shift over the next few months as his mother had indicated to the school's truancy counselor that they might move into a more permanent residence in January.

Shawn still struggled with basic skills, such as print awareness. Sophia reviewed a telling anecdote from November about guiding Shawn through a book. Shawn still wasn't handling the book correctly, and he instructed her to start from a page in the middle. He also pointed almost exclusively to the pictures and not the text when Sophia asked him what part of the book she was reading.

In the same note, Sophia had described Shawn's low reading comprehension. Despite their just having read the story together, when she asked Shawn to retell it to her, he had little recall of the actual story. Instead Shawn flipped through the pages, describing the pictures.

In addition, unlike many students in her class who could readily identify their names in print, Sophia's anecdotal notes revealed that she had to assist Shawn in identifying his name card for center time even in late November.

However, some of her anecdotes showed beginning signs of growth in this area. Sophia had recorded one story from late November when Shawn pointed to the S in alphabet center.

"Is that an S as in Syrone?" she asked, testing his knowledge of the letter.

"No, like Shawn." He responded. He then pointed to the "a" saying, "That's in Shawn too!"

This was a good early sign of developing letter identification skills. As with many of her students, much of the growth she saw with Shawn was built from pieces of their daily literacy routines like repeated exposure to the spelling, writing, sound, and letters of their names.

Shawn's writing skills and understanding of the purpose of writing were also very poor. Sophia had a representative anecdote from the block center. He had been mimicking Duante's writing when Sophia asked him what he was doing. He responded with comments like, "This is pretty" or "Look, I can do it on my own." The combination of illegible scribbling on the pad and a lack of understanding of the function of his writing attempt placed him low on the writing rubric.

Shawn's writing anecdote was a big contrast with the writing anecdote in Keisha's file. Sophia read over an anecdote in which Keisha had been scribbling on a pad of paper in the dramatic play center. She handed Sophia the paper, which had a clear K-E-I-S printed and a trail of scribble followed by some ill formed numbers.

"What's this?" Sophia asked, accepting the sheet.

"I'm having a party, I want you to come." She responded.

Although this was not a completely fleshed out response, Keisha's answer showed Sophia a more developed understanding of the purpose of writing than Shawn had demonstrated. In her own quiet reflection, Sophia noted that so much of pre-K writing is not about forming perfect letters on big three-lined paper, but about truly understanding writing's purpose.

The data Sophia had collected on Keisha's strong phonological and writing skills painted a clear picture. The anecdotes (like the story of Keisha identifying the /f/-/f/-/f/ sound in Frosted Flakes at breakfast) attested to Keisha's ability to identify beginning sounds from words, and identify words with any given letter sound.

Sophia was not surprised by Keisha's advanced writing ability. Keisha spent more time in the writing center than any other student and her grandmother worked with her nightly. Sophia's anecdotes about the morning sign-in revealed that on October 15th Keisha was able to properly form the K-E-I-S letters in her name. By November she was one of only a couple students who had mastered all the letters. While flipping through the anecdotes for all her students, Sophia made a mental note of how important the morning sign-in routine was for giving her students daily writing practice and for providing clear data on their writing levels.

Despite her strengths, Keisha had poor listening comprehension skills. Sophia had several anecdotes describing Keisha's irrelevant responses to read-aloud questions—an indication of poor comprehension of the stories. She also noted how fidgety Keisha was on the rug and during silent listening times.

As she reviewed the full collection of anecdotes on Keisha, Sophia gleaned an important insight about her learning style: Keisha is a highly kinesthetic learner. Her comprehension improved when Sophia paired her teaching with physical motion. Keisha often engaged in physical motion when contemplating a response. She regularly spun around while thinking and acted something out on the rug before answering a question. Even Keisha's ability to count in sequence improved when the class counted jumping jacks rather than just looking at a number line. Sophia noted that this information might be crucial for effectively instructing Keisha in the future.

Keisha's greatest weaknesses were her social skills. She was an extremely friendly child and she was often solicitous of adult attention and affirmation. However, she was one of the least likely students to share and take turns. In fact, Keisha even resisted playing with other children, often going to the writing center where she would be alone. Keisha also cried more than any other student in the class. Sophia had learned to deal

with this behavior by separating her from the group, which allowed Keisha to see the fun she was missing, but prevented her from disturbing everyone. An apology was all that was needed to rejoin the group.

Though time consuming, the process of assessing her students with original work samples and anecdotal notes proved invaluable to Sophia's planning process. At the end of each three-month cycle Sophia had a very clear idea of the skills her students had mastered and the goals she should set for their progress. She also found the ELAS rubric to be extremely useful in helping her identify the exact skills her students needed to master. Once Sophia had a clear picture of where her students were, she was able to create individualized learning plans to purposefully and strategically guide them to their learning goals.

Reflection Questions III:

1. What does the term "authentic assessment" mean to you?
2. What challenges do you foresee in collecting assessment data in your classroom? How might you plan to overcome these challenges?
3. What systems did Sophia build in order to facilitate the easy collection of work samples and anecdotes?
4. How did Sophia balance standardized and performance-based evaluation? If you had to guess, which type of assessment do you think would reveal more about a student's ability?

Individualized Learning Plans

Saturday had been a long day of analyzing her students' progress on each ELAS skill. When she awoke early on Sunday morning and walked into her kitchen, Sophia was faced with a spreadsheet of rubric scores and a stack of completed rubrics waiting on her table from late Saturday night. She had a long day of planning ahead of her.

Sophia first focused on class-wide trends in the data. She noticed, for example, that her students were almost universally low in reading comprehension and noted to herself that she needed to model this skill more during her read-alouds. She saw dramatic improvement in letter identification and writing skills, especially in students' ability to spell their names. Sophia attributed this success to the classroom routines that included daily practice of name writing, their weekly word wall challenge (where students were "tested" on the number of sight words they could spell in five to ten minutes), and the multiple printings of their name around the room (on the rug, on their choice time cards, and on their cubby spaces).

Once Sophia isolated the areas in which her whole class struggled, she was able to modify her long-term plan to emphasize those skills in her instruction over the next few months.

Then she shifted her attention to each individual student's needs. In preparation for her meetings the next week with students' guardians, Sophia developed an Individual Action Plan (IAP) for each student. The IAP highlighted the student's strengths, and identified target areas where the student needed to improve. Sophia also wrote out several steps that she would take to address the student's target areas and identified several concrete activities that families could engage in to improve their child's skills.

The ELAS data was essential in creating these plans. For each student, Sophia used the ELAS rubric to determine the skills he or she would need to master to improve. For example, Tyrone scored a 2 in

concepts of print. On the rubric, Sophia saw that he understood how to handle a book, he knew where Sophia should start and stop reading, but he still focused more on the pictures than the print to tell the story. Also, when cleaning up in centers, Tyrone identified the pictures, not the text, on the bin labels to figure out where to put toys. Sophia knew that if Tyrone became more aware of textual print in books and in learning centers, he would improve from a 2 to a 3 in print awareness. She was able to translate this information to an Individualized Action Plan for his development.

With Tyrone's data in mind, Sophia committed to pointing out print to him so that he would have a greater understanding of the importance of text. Sophia suggested to Tyrone's mother that in everyday activities like cooking or reading the newspaper, she point out print on food boxes and in stories. It was important to Sophia that Tyrone be able to recognize the prevalence of print in the world and its informational function and importance.

As a general matter, in meetings with student's families, Sophia would highlight for family members the concept of print awareness and encourage them, with specific examples, to surround their children with words. She showed families how to encourage their children to recognize words and not pictures when "reading a story."

Sophia repeated this process of data assessment and planning for each of her students. IAPs allowed her to target her instruction to meet each child at their current skill level and ensure that by the end of the next ELAS assessment period they moved one to two levels on the rubric.

The wide range of strengths and weaknesses her students demonstrated struck Sophia. While Keisha was strong in letter-sound connection, writing, and phonological awareness, she was still remarkably weak in listening skills. Thus, her IAP prioritized higher-level comprehension skills of books and more read-alouds. Sophia was also determined to work individually with Keisha on reading and responding to stories. Knowing that Keisha's grandparents worked regularly with Keisha and that they often borrowed books from the family lending library, Sophia encouraged them to spend more time asking focused comprehension questions and modeling how to think about the plot of a story. She also suggested that they read the same book several times in a week to build her comprehension through repetition.

Meanwhile, Shawn's IAP focused on his weakness in print awareness and his lack of understanding of the purpose of writing. While Sophia committed to focusing Shawn's attention on the function of writing in labels and instructions throughout the classroom, she asked Shawn's mom to actively model the purpose of writing in everyday life. For the guardians of Sophia's students who were not getting enough practice with writing's everyday uses, Sophia encouraged them to invite their children to write the grocery list or take down phone messages.

Duante's ELAS scores revealed that he was one of her most advanced students. Sophia smiled as she reviewed his many strengths. She remembered the question he had asked her at the beginning of the year, right after completing his diagnostics, "I'm good, right?"

Duante tested impressively on the diagnostics for phonological skills, one of the areas that pre-K students find particularly difficult, and letter identification. He was also among the first students to write his own name. Duante even excelled at reading comprehension. Sophia sometimes asked higher-order questions during read-aloud aimed specifically at assessing Duante's advanced skills. She marveled at Duante's writing skills and ability to break words into syllables. He could match letters to the sounds he heard, which positioned him well to be able to sound out and write simple sentences on his own. By the end of the next ELAS assessment period, Sophia hoped that he would be writing independently.

Sophia knew it was important to continue to push Duante and ensure that she sufficiently differentiated so that even at his advanced level, her classroom challenged him. She might call a student like Tyrone up to the board to find a letter, but she would often call Duante to the board to help her write out a whole word. Sophia would often ask Duante what a word would become if she changed one of the letters; whereas she would ask Tyrone to find another letter or identify another word that starts with the letter he found.

During read-aloud, Sophia would occasionally pose higher-level comprehension questions that only Duante and a couple other advanced students were able to answer. She might ask students to compare and contrast characters or relate the characters' experiences to their own. Duante was one of the few students who could accurately answer these high level inquiries without Sophia's guidance. Finally, Duante's small group spent a significant amount of time reading and writing independently with minimal guidance from Sophia.

While Duante was Sophia's most advanced student, Shantell was still the farthest behind. Shantell still displayed extreme deficits and rarely made verbal contributions in class.

Shantell was, however, demonstrating progress, and Sophia tried to highlight Shantell's growing strengths in her meeting with Shantell's mother. Shantell was now able to identify her own name in print, and she had begun to attempt writing in the centers during choice time. In addition, Shantell was starting to form simple and common words like "I" and "you" and would frequently participate in class sing-alongs with some sort of sound, even if she could not clearly form words. Although this still left Shantell at a basic ELAS level, these were important developments.

As she reviewed the data and made a personalized plan for Shantell, Sophia became profoundly frustrated that her requests for special education testing and services went unanswered. Because of her district's limited resources, Shantell still hadn't gone through an initial evaluation despite three months of requests from Sophia.

Sophia decided that she had no choice but to obtain special education knowledge herself. She arranged to meet with a speech therapist and gathered exercises that would help Shantell organize and articulate sounds. Sophia focused her meeting with Shantell's mother on the ways they could both implement these exercises to get Shantell to speak.

Sophia's three-month IAPs for each of her students were key to her yearlong success. Those mini-plans allowed her to group students by strengths and weaknesses and to target areas for small group instruction. They helped focus her efforts on appropriate short-term ELAS goals that would ultimately contribute to significant academic gains by the end of the school year.

See the Toolkit (pp. 23-30) ✖ for a sample of students' December **Individual Action Plans**.

Differentiating for Learning Styles

"K! K! King Kong, King Kong, /k/-/k/-/k/!"

Sophia and Tyrone chanted in unison as they beat their chests in a King Kong motion. "P! Penguin, /p/-/p/-/p/!" they went on and Sophia giggled silently at Tyrone's Penguin waddle. Tyrone's ELAS scores had been low on the letter identification and phonological awareness rubrics. Despite working with him on these skills over the month of December, Sophia saw little progress.

It was on December 21st, only a few days before the holiday break, that Sophia had a new idea about how to drive Tyrone's learning. That day, the two of them took a "Letter Walk" over big letters Sophia had taped to the rug. Despite walking the K five times, and discussing the letter, Tyrone still struggled to identify it on the wall or write it on his white board.

Sophia knew that Tyrone was remarkably capable of remembering the words to any song that her class sung as long as he was actively dancing around. Since the letter walk was not working, Sophia improvised the King Kong chant and movements with the young boy. Suddenly he was able to retain the information. Reflecting on the letter exercise and on the details of Tyrone's other learning breakthroughs in her anecdotal notes, Sophia realized that, even more so than Keisha, Tyrone was an intensely kinesthetic learner.

When her class reassembled, Sophia planned to capitalize on this breakthrough during one-on-one instruction with Tyrone. Sophia and Tyrone began to work on letter identification with dances and suddenly, Sophia started to see clear progress. That progress seemed linked to a mini-penguin waddle in his chair while working on P and a compulsion to tap his chest lightly every time he searched for the K or the /k/-/k/-/k/ sound, did not diminish Sophia's excitement. In mid-January, even Tyrone's mother noted the rapid growth in her son's letter identification skills chuckling at the dance movements Tyrone made while practicing at home.

Teaching the Interconnected Domains of Child Development

When you are teaching children the alphabet, you can also teach them to move their hands in the shape of letters (fine motor skills), their legs in time to a beat (gross motor skills), and to show respect for their classmates as each takes a turn leading the class (social skills).

Sophia came to appreciate the different learning styles of each of her students. Shawn, for example, was highly dependent on visual cues. He loved to draw and excelled at incorporating detail into pictures that most of Sophia's students were not capturing.

Sophia found that many of his best learning experiences developed out of discussions and praise around his drawings. "What's this?" She asked as Shawn sat coloring during center time after the class read *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

"It's a house." He responded, beaming proudly, a shift from his usual shy and sullen stance.

"Wow!" Sophia exclaimed. "Can we label it?"

Shawn sat poised with his pencil and a little stuck. "/h/-/h/-/h/," he began to sound out. His response demonstrated significant phonological growth from even a month ago.

"Do you know what letter that is?" Shawn didn't, but on his own, he located it on the word chart.

"H!" Shawn exclaimed and began to write it under his picture. Shawn's letter identification had also drastically improved, due in no small part to Sophia's regular encouragement of writing and letter identification when they interacted in the centers.

"House..."

"Mouse!" He replied to Sophia's prompt for the rhyming game the two frequently played.

When Sophia and Shawn finished the picture's label, she hung it up in the classroom, celebrating his accomplishment.

In January, Shawn's family finally moved into a permanent residence, and his attendance began to drastically improve. That new stability, combined with Sophia's tailored approach to his visual learning style, led to great progress. By praising his growth and capitalizing on learning experiences, which matched his learning modality, Sophia had put Shawn on the path to two levels of growth on the ELAS rubric in just three months.

In addition to using her knowledge of learning styles to design effective one-on-one lessons for her students, Sophia incorporated this information into her whole class instruction, allowing her to reach a broader group of students, and to reinforce the same material. Sophia found that even highly kinesthetic learners, for example, often benefited from visual and audio representation of new material. Sophia found that if the students touch, move, look, *and* hear, they learn more.

Unit Planning with a Flexible Curriculum

During a reading of *The Three Little Pigs* in Sophia's "topic study" on buildings, the class began an impromptu conversation about wind. Tyrone started to loudly act out the wind's howling, dancing through their circle on the rug. Keisha shared that her grandmother bundled her in an extra scarf to keep the wind from blistering her face. Instantly, Sophia thought she had found the topic for their next unit.

Creative Curriculum, an "unscripted" pre-K program, asks teachers to build "topic-study" units around their students' interests. Creating two-weeks of lessons around a topic that will engage her students requires that Sophia always be aware of their changing interests. Once she comes up with an idea, she tests it to ensure that the topic will facilitate an effective and age-appropriate two-week learning experience. (See the right column for *Creative Curriculum's* guide to selecting a good topic study).

When Sophia sat down that Saturday with her weekend action plan, the first item on her agenda was to explore the potential of wind as the topic for their next unit. Sophia quickly determined that the topic had potential. All of her students had first hand knowledge about the wind and its effects. Also, Sophia knew that a greater understanding of the wind and weather would be valuable and relevant to her students' lives.

She also reflected on the ways the wind topic study could build on some of their prior classroom discussions. Checking the weather in the newspaper was an almost-daily part of her class routine. Frequently Sophia and her students would discuss the implications of the day's weather for what they might wear or what activities they might engage in outdoors. Finally, her students were aware of the serious weather phenomena around the world including the Tsunami one year earlier. Frequently, during the building unit, they discussed "strong" and "weak" materials and how weather and the elements might affect a building over time. Sophia began to get really excited about the learning opportunities in a "wind" unit.

Satisfied that wind would engage students and provide a meaningful learning experience, Sophia next had to explore whether this topic could be used to teach the New Jersey state curriculum standards. Ultimately, Sophia followed a four-step process to answer this question and plan a topic study:

- (1) Create a content web that maps on paper how the topic of study can be used to cover standards in each content area (literacy, social studies, science, math, technology and creative arts);

- (2) Create an interest web that describes how students can interact with the topic in each learning center;
- (3) Create a two-week plan that reflects the weekly changes Sophia will make to her centers as well as the possible small and whole group instructional activities she will lead around the topic; and
- (4) Create two-weeks of detailed daily lesson plans.

Her first step was to create the content web for the wind unit. Under each of the six content areas, Sophia brainstormed general activities that would explore the wind and directly align with the content skills her students needed to learn. For literacy, her students would read books and poems about the wind and describe their experiences. She would also have her students compare their experiences with the wind to people in other areas of the world and other cultures, giving the unit a multi-cultural focus and allowing her students to better understand the geographic diversity of weather.

For science, Sophia knew that she would discuss and explore weather with her students. She also hoped to facilitate an in-class experiment with wind and its impact on different objects. Sophia found herself easily tying math objectives to her students' classroom experiments with objects and the wind. She knew this activity would provide an opportunity for students to gain a concrete understanding of relative distances and comparison vocabulary ("more" and "less" or "closer" and "farther") as students predicted how far the wind would move different objects around the room.

Sophia's students would explore technology and the wind through discussions of flight. She was excited about this because her students had already expressed a great deal of interest in how birds, planes, and even balloons took flight and moved through the air. She knew that it would be easy to engage her students in a more in-depth exploration of these topics through books, discussions, and hands-on activities.

Finally, Sophia brainstormed about how a study of wind could tie into the creative arts. For this area, Sophia always tried to think of activities that would engage her kinesthetic learners in music and movement and her

Selecting a Good Study Topic

Sophia's classroom is organized around two-week topic study units that she develops around students' interests. Although she is always collecting ideas from classroom discussions and her students play, she ultimately must test any topic against the following criteria to ensure that it will facilitate age-appropriate and worthwhile learning for her students.

- Does this topic address children's **interests** or potential interest?
- Is this topic real/relevant to children's **experiences** and is it **age-appropriate**?
- Do enough of the children have **experience** with the topic so they can come up with questions to investigate and explore? Does the topic **build** on what children already know?
- Can children **explore** the topic firsthand? Can real objects be manipulated?
- Are **resources**—such as people to talk to, places to visit, objects or living things to observe and explore, books—available?
- Can children do some research for this topic **independently** without depending entirely on the teacher's assistance?
- Can the topic be explored in a variety of ways over an **extended period**?
- Will the topic permit children to use **literacy** learning and **math** in real-life contexts?
- Will the topic allow children to explore key components of **science** and **social studies**?
- Can the **arts** and **technology** be incorporated readily into this topic?
- Does the topic lend itself to representation in a variety of **media** (e.g. dramatic play, writing, construction)?
- Will the topic facilitate communication with **families**? Are family members likely to want to get involved with the project?
- Is the topic respectful of **cultural differences**?
- Is the topic worth **studying**?

Source: *Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, p. 191

visual learners in painting and crafts. The wind had obvious ties in Sophia's mind to movement and she easily made a lengthy mental list of dance activities with scarves that simulated the wind and musical activities that recreated its sound. When she had trouble thinking of a visual-learner tie-in for creative arts, Sophia searched online.

The Internet is a great resource for concrete pre-K activities, but she often finds that the huge wealth of information online makes it very important to be goal-oriented. Sophia knows that while it is always tempting to incorporate fun or exciting activities into her lessons, this type of "activity-driven" planning for her students does not facilitate purposeful learning experiences that will help students meet their academic goals. Instead, Sophia approaches her search for classroom activities with the learning objective at the forefront of her mind. In the end, Sophia often takes teaching ideas from the Internet but freely modifies them to maximize their teaching potential.

In this case, Sophia wanted a creative activity that would allow her students to visually represent the wind. Sophia sorted through a list of pre-K craft ideas and found a "blow paint" activity that directly aligned with her students' visual content needs as well as her goal of having students understand the effects of different wind strength.

Now that Sophia had successfully completed the first step of unit planning with a content web, she began laying out the materials and activities she would add to each of her centers.

In dramatic play she would encourage students to set up a kite store or prepare for a flight on an airplane. She made sure the book *Flying*, by Donald Crews, was on hand to get them started. She brought in Chinese fans with Chinese writing to the toys and games center to highlight diversity in written language. In the sand and water center, she would encourage students to blow through straws to move boats. In the block center, she would encourage students to construct buildings that could withstand the wind or the Big Bad Wolf, tying students' play activities into their story comprehension skills.

In her library, Sophia would add several books with wind themes as well as some sailboat- and airplane-themed magazines. Students would go on a wind hunt during outdoor play, finding the direction of the wind in the playground. They would design kites on the computers, make fans and blow paintings in art, whisk meringues in cooking noting the movements of the egg whites and its similarity to wind in the clouds, and dance with scarves in music and movement. With every activity, Sophia thought carefully about how to ensure her students were progressing toward her literacy, science, social studies, math, technology, and creative arts objectives.

Once Sophia had the two idea webs on paper (one for all the content areas she would cover in her wind unit and one for the activities she would facilitate in her centers), she began creating her "Two Week Plan." On one page for each week, Sophia created a chart where she mapped out the changes she would make to her centers to facilitate all the activities on her interest area web. On the side, she kept a "To Do" list to remind herself of the materials she might need to acquire or remember to bring into school.

Then Sophia created a rough plan for what New Jersey Standards she would cover on each day. Sophia plans out activities for group time and story time. She also plans out small group activities, targeting a different group of three to four students each day based on their shared learning needs. Sophia also tries to highlight for herself which students she might monitor each day for ELAS anecdotes, mindful of which students' target areas will be hit by the day's plan so she knows who is most likely to create work samples or display qualities that will be important for their three-month ELAS evaluation. Finally, Sophia notes the activities and prep she will need Ms. Franklin, her classroom aide, to engage in.

Once Sophia has completed her “Two Week Plan”, Sophia translates each day’s activities onto her Daily Lesson Plan Flow Chart, which maps the day’s exact schedule of activities in half-hour increments. As always, Sophia finds that effective teaching involves a balance between careful planning and flexibility. On her daily lesson plan, Sophia writes out a detailed synopsis of every minute of her day, scripting her morning message and even reminding herself of the specific phonological technique she will employ in her routine that day or how she will “mess up” the calendar so students will have the opportunity to exercise their own calendar skills and correct her. She also considers ways to maximize her group instruction and choice time to meet the needs of students who are struggling to show significant growth.

While Sophia walks into each day with a detailed plan, she is forever on the lookout for “teachable” moments. This skill is particularly important in a pre-K classroom where so much effective learning occurs through carefully designed and facilitated student play. By always having a clear picture of her students’ academic goals and needs, Sophia is able to deviate effectively from her plans in order to push a student, thereby maximizing every instructional opportunity.

See the Toolkit (pp. 31-40) ✂ for an **Excerpt from Sophia’s Wind Topic Study Planning Materials**.

Math Instruction

“Okay class, everyone has five raisins in front of them. Who here is ready to eat to zero?” Sophia questioned her young students at the beginning of snack time. Hands shot up in the air.

“It looks like we’re all ready. Let’s do it together.” Sophia continued.

“Five, four, three, two, one!” the class chanted, popping one raisin into their mouths between each number.

Sophia’s Math Goals

By the end of the year, students will be able to:

1. Rote count from 1 to 20
2. Identify the numerals for numbers 1 to 10
3. Identify standard 2-D shapes and colors
4. Describe time and space using math vocabulary (e.g. before and after for sequencing; positional words and comparative words for space)
5. Recognize, follow and create basic patterns
6. Place objects in order from smallest to largest

Math in a pre-K classroom focuses mainly on understanding numbers, object relationships, and daily routines like reading a calendar. Sophia and her students spend a lot of time counting throughout the day. To start, many of her classroom routines incorporate counting: ten seconds to get to the rug for morning meeting, a five step process for focusing on the teacher, and her students’ favorite, a daily counting of the tickets they have accumulated through good behavior. Sophia tries to encourage her students to count up and down at different points in the day. Her students also practice their counting skills during small group instruction or choice time. She frequently pulls students aside to play with money cups, count the number of pennies, animals, or blocks they have, count the value of the dimes they are given, or “count by tens.” And, of course, Sophia has a catalogue of math songs including “One Potato, Two Potato,” Tyrone’s favorite.

Sophia tries to spend some time each morning reviewing “daily routine” math. Everyday her students read the date on the calendar and review the time they start morning meeting. Sophia also reviews the day’s schedule with her students, sometime “messing up” the times of activities so that they will correct her. For pre-K students, time can be an abstract concept, so Sophia likes to contextualize it in daily life routines with

Core Math Skills and Activities in Sophia's Classroom

Sophia's school derives their pre-K math curriculum from *The Everyday Math* program that has 9 primary skill focuses and examples of corresponding activities:

Measurement - e.g., measuring a partner with plastic spoons or craft sticks; finding things around the room that are taller, shorter, or the same size as they are; building structures in blocks that are taller, shorter, or the same height; using a rocker balance to compare weights.

Numeration - e.g., Simon Says with a certain number of a repeated action [clap 2 times]; eating to zero at snack time; matching the correct number of beans to the corresponding number on an egg carton; counting off the number of children in class; playing simple hopscotch.

Ongoing Daily Routines - e.g., calendar, class number line; weather observation routine; attendance routine with chart.

Money - e.g., sorting coins in egg cartons or muffin tins.

Data and Chance - e.g., birthday bar graph; age change graph; surveys such as "Who has pets?;" probability activities (e.g., Which color marble are we more likely to pull out of this bag? Why?)

Geometry - e.g., exploring pattern blocks, making designs in the Art Area with paper cut outs of pattern blocks; using a template to draw shapes; making animals or insects using geometric shapes.

Patterns and Functions - e.g., sorting items like "red" and "not red;" discovering and sorting things that float or sink; patterned macaroni necklaces; "stand, squat, or kneel" pattern on line.

Clocks and Calendars -e.g., placing photos or pictures the children draw of classroom events in sequence; dismantling the monthly calendar.

Operations - e.g., tell "one more" stories such as a dinosaur laid 5 eggs. Then he laid one more egg. How many eggs does he have now?; Representing numbers in different ways on students' fingers (e.g., 2 and 2, 3 and 1, or 4 and 0 to make 4); exploring counting on a number line; "How Many" Hide and Seek - how many children are missing from the group.

which they are familiar. The day's schedule, which rarely alters significantly, is an excellent vehicle. Students find it easy to understand time in terms of when they eat lunch, when they nap, and when their parents arrive.

Sophia also worked with her students on understanding the relationships between objects and building a vocabulary to describe these relationships. In the first few months of school, Sophia struggled to get her students to use more elaborate descriptive words than bigger and smaller. But soon she realized that teaching math vocabulary, like any other vocabulary, merely took modeling and repetition. Soon Keisha was able to complain, "Shawn's sandwich is taller than mine!" and Duante would share, "My boat moves farther than Tyrone's!" in the sand and water center. These comments revealed a more advanced vocabulary and understanding of object relationships.

Sophia also taught object relationships in terms of pattern and sequence. She spent a lot of time playing pattern games with struggling students during small group instruction. In addition, Sophia tried to regularly incorporate patterns into daily activities, asking students to line up in a patterned way (i.e. standing, crouching, sitting) or arrange their snack in a pattern. Sophia's students also practiced many of their math skills using manipulatives made from everyday materials. For example, Sophia's students frequently utilized colored paperclips for creating patterns or coins for sorting. Overall, Sophia found that the more daily practice students gained with abstract math concepts, the better they were able to understand them.

Reflection Questions IV:

1. What techniques does Sophia use to maximize instructional time during choice time and ensure that she is meeting individual academic and social needs, while collecting anecdotes and work samples?
2. How does Sophia differentiate her instruction to challenge children of different ability levels?
3. Reflect on your own learning style. What types of instruction were most effective when you were a child?
4. Imagine you are planning to teach a short lesson on the letter V. Brainstorm techniques that you could use to connect with children of all learning styles?
5. Choose a topic study from the following three: farm animals, boxes, or community workers. Come up with **two activities** you could introduce in **two of the following centers**: Dramatic Play, Blocks, Toys & Games (Manipulatives), Art, or Discovery that will both teach students about that topic and help strengthen literacy or math skills (see the Toolkit for examples of activities in Sophia's wind topic study webs).
6. Look around your house for everyday items you could use as manipulatives in your classroom. Make a list of 5-6 different items and how you might use them (e.g., paper clips for pattern necklaces, aluminum foil for making different sized balls).

Growth!

Months after her initial diagnostics, performance assessments and original IAPs, Sophia was seeing significant academic growth in her students. In February, Sophia had made Shantell center manager, responsible for handing out the name cards to each student before choice time. At first, this was a great challenge for Shantell. Students snapped in exasperation each time she handed them the wrong card. Sophia persevered, pulling her students aside and reminding them of their class value of supporting their friends. As a result, Shantell's letter identification skills had grown tremendously. Within a month and a half, Shantell could hand out the cards with 70% accuracy, often only mixing up students like Tyrone and Terrel whose names began with the same letters.

The sound order practice Sophia had obtained from a language specialist was also beginning to work. Although Shantell was still primarily non-verbal, she was able to form simple words like "I," "too," and "yes." Additionally, her confidence in her verbal ability had skyrocketed. Shantell was now a major participator in group activities singing loudly during sing-alongs and volunteering with the word "me" frequently.

Duante's reading comprehension, phonological awareness and writing skills had all taken off. Sophia often found Duante co-opting story details into his play in the centers whether preparing for the rain after a story about a girl looking for a rainbow or building a bear cave after reading *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. His strong grasp of phonological skills was allowing him to break down small words by sounding them out on his arm. "/f/-/o/-/x/," Duante would tap three times on different parts of his arm, corresponding to the beginning, middle, and end sound of the word, before recording it on his white board. These phonological skills made Duante one of Sophia's first students able to read simple books entirely on his own. He was also among the first students to successfully accomplish the word wall challenge of writing ten sight words in five minutes. Now he was working on fifteen.

Keisha still had days of crying but they were fewer and farther between. Sophia often heard her loudly asserting her feelings in center time, "I'm sad that you won't share!" or "I'm angry that you hit me!" Although Keisha was still not as socially adept as others in the class, she had begun to independently mediate her own conflicts. Keisha's story comprehension skills were also growing. She was often actively partnered with Duante in recreating story plots during dramatic play.

Shawn also showed tremendous academic improvement. Sophia had one anecdote about Shawn writing a shark story and telling her, "The shark won't bite me because shark starts with S like Shawn." Seeing the amount of growth in comprehension, print awareness, writing, and letter identification Shawn displayed in just that anecdote, Sophia knew that her persistence was beginning to pay off.

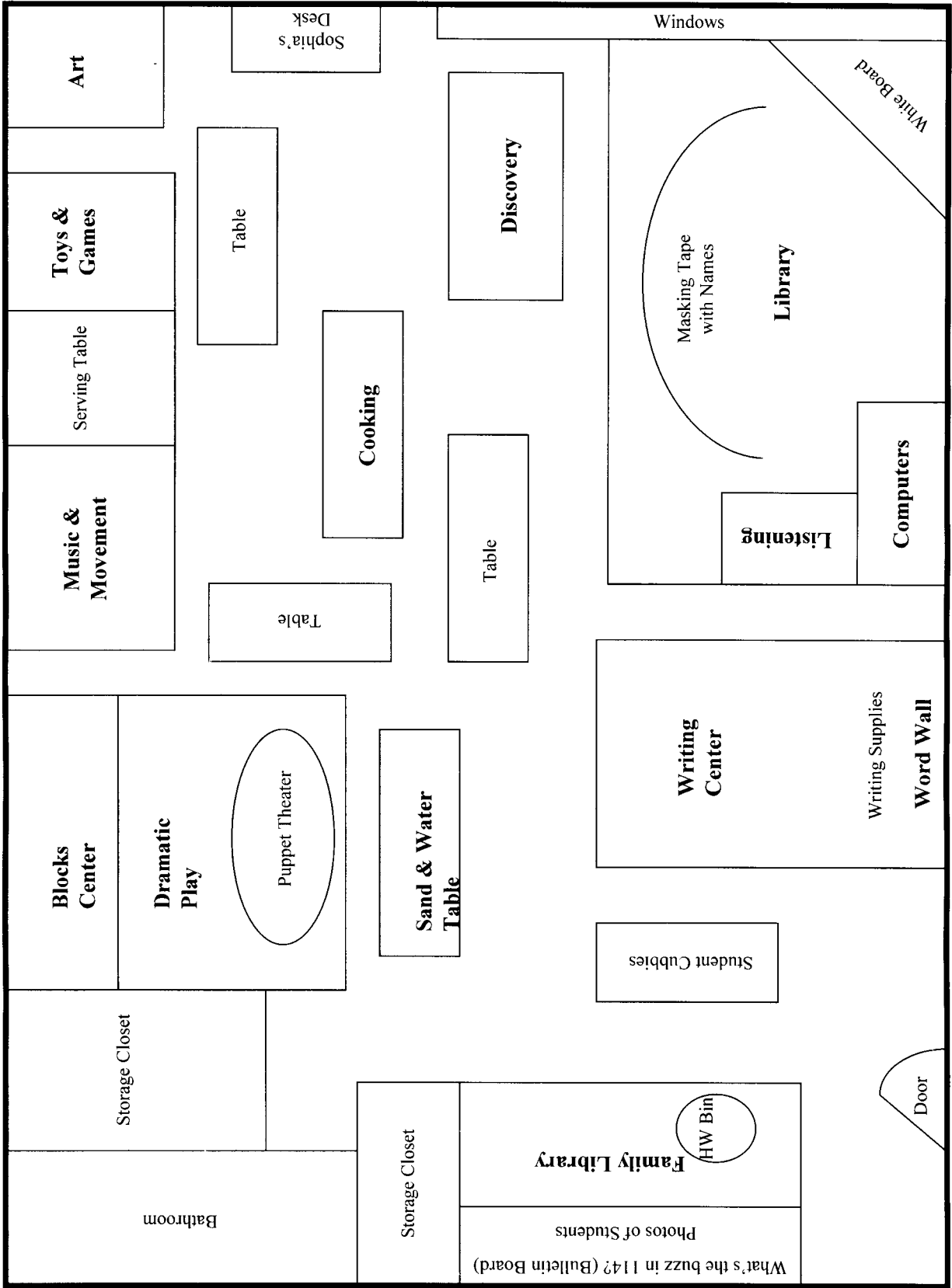
Tyrone had mastered more than half of the sixteen letters he would need to learn to reach benchmark, often leading the class in his letter dance movements during morning meeting.

Sophia's students still had room to improve and several more months before the end-of-year assessments. Shantell had many more letters to master and strides to make with her verbal skills. Keisha was poised to begin reading on her own and Sophia would work one-on-one to make this happen. Duante had yet to hit his own goals of fifteen words, but he would. And Sophia was still stuck on what sort of dance she and Tyrone would invent for the letter X. But with her commitment to making her students, "More than ready for kindergarten," her strong classroom culture and investment, her purposeful planning, effective execution and her eye always focused on ways to increase instructional time, meet the needs of her students and improve her own performance, Sophia was confident she would see significant academic gains in all her students by the end of the year.

Teaching As Leadership For Early Childhood

Sophia Pappas' Story

Toolkit ✕



September 8, 2005

Dear Families,

Welcome to pre-school! I cannot wait to get to know you and your child better in the weeks and months ahead. Together we can make your child's first year as a student a highly productive and enriching experience.

We will be building a supportive, safe, and energetic classroom community. The success of our community will depend on all students meeting certain behavioral expectations.

The four basic rules of our classroom:

- Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Use walking feet, inside voices, and listening ears.
- Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- Follow all directions when they are given.

To encourage students, I will recognize appropriate behavior with individual and class rewards. Students will be praised for their good behavior and will be rewarded with positive calls and notes home, stickers, special privileges, or awards.

One of my top priorities is generating enthusiasm among students for reading. I have attached some information about our family library along with a library card for you and your child so that you may enjoy some of the books in our classroom together at home.

In order to ensure that your child gets the most out of pre-school, I will be giving homework on a daily basis. Working with your child on these assignments will keep you up to date on what we are covering in class and will help reinforce skills and knowledge learned. I will be putting homework assignments (including an Everyday Math Homelink Journal and literacy building assignment) in this folder each day and collecting assignments from the night before. **Please make sure your child brings this folder along with the Everyday Math Journal to school every day.** I have attached a *Homework Zone* sign which you may hang up in a quiet place where you and your child can complete the assignments at home.

We all want to ensure that your child has a comfortable and fun time at school. **Please bring in for your child a twin fitted sheet for naptime and a change of clothes.**

We will supply your child with all necessary materials at school, but I encourage you to purchase a package of crayons and a package of pencils so your child can complete all homework assignments at home.

I look forward to communicating with you about your child's progress. I will be calling home regularly and sending home a weekly behavior report each Friday starting next week, which your child should bring back signed by you in this folder on the following Monday. **Please fill out the attached guardian questionnaire and put it back into this folder as soon as possible.** Please do not ever hesitate to call me, write me a note, or set up an in person conference. With all of us working together, it's going to be a great year!

Sincerely,

Ms. Sophia E. Pappas, Pre-K teacher

FAMILY LIBRARY ALL ARE WELCOME!



As part of my overall plan to get the students excited about reading, I am creating a family library in the classroom from which you and your child can take out books. Below you will find a blank family library card for you and your child. **Please fill out the card and return the bottom half of this sheet to me in this folder as soon as possible so that I can laminate your card.**

I hope, over time, with constant use of the family library, to develop a *Family Picks* section in our classroom library consisting of books highly recommended by students' families.

Together, we can generate enthusiasm for books and expose the children to a wide variety of stories.

FAMILY LIBRARY CARD
Issued by Ms. Pappas to
_____ and
(parent/guardian's name)

(student's name)
so that they may enjoy our classroom
library at home together!

A small cartoon illustration of a grey owl reading a book, positioned next to a stack of four colorful books (red, yellow, blue, and green).

September 19, 2005

Dear Families,

This week we are starting Home Links, part of our Everyday Math curriculum. **Each Monday you will find a new activity in the journal to complete with your child.** Throughout the week when you have time, do the activity with your child. Record your observations in the notebook with your child. You may have your child draw a picture, while you write down a description of what you did. **Please keep the journal in your child's homework folder when you are not using it. I will be checking it throughout the week, but please feel free to complete the activity any time from Monday through Thursday.** Your child will also continue to have daily homework assignments in the red folder.

These activities are a fun way to reinforce skills learned in schools at home! I hope you enjoy completing them with your child. As always, please feel free to call me or stop by the class with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Ms. Pappas

September 19, 2005

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This week we are starting Home Links, part of our Everyday Math curriculum. **Each Monday you will find a new activity in the journal to complete with your child.** Throughout the week when you have time, do the activity with your child. Record your observations in the notebook with your child. You may have your child draw a picture, while you write down a description of what you did. **Please keep the journal in your child's homework folder when you are not using it. I will be checking it throughout the week, but please feel free to complete the activity any time from Monday through Thursday.** Your child will also continue to have daily homework assignments in the red folder.

These activities are a fun way to reinforce skills learned in schools at home! I hope you enjoy completing them with your child. As always, please feel free to call me or stop by the class with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Ms. Pappas

Guardian Questionnaire

Child's Name: _____

You know your child best! Please tell me a little about him/her:

1. What is your relationship to the student? (mother, father, aunt...) _____
2. When is your child's birthday? _____
3. Please list any activities, games, or books your child enjoys:

4. Please share any information I should know about your child (medications, conditions, special seat requirements, bathroom needs):

Please answer the following so we can regularly communicate:

1. Phone number(s) where I can reach you: _____
2. Convenient times to call: _____
3. Who will be picking up your child everyday from school?

4. Please provide the names of those people allowed to take your child home.

5. What is your mailing address?


6. I hope you will feel free to contact me. I can be reached through the school (973-705-3800) or on my cell phone (917-538-4152).

Finally, I am sure you have many skills and interests that would greatly enrich our class!

Would you like to come in and read to the kids? Would you like to be a guest speaker? Could you bake or provide food for special celebrations? Please tell me if and how you would like to become involved in the classroom.

Thank you! I look forward to communicating frequently and working closely with you this year.

—Ms. Sophia Pappas



Welcome to our
Learning
Community!

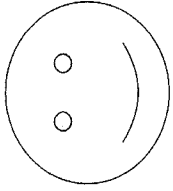

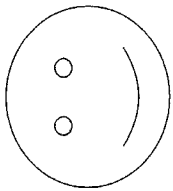


This year we are starting an exciting new curriculum called “Creative Curriculum.” We will explore various parts of our world using books, computers, materials, our imaginations, and so much more!

Our ideas for topics come from teachers, students, and you!

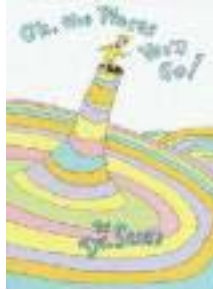
We invite you to stop by our “Buzz board” and put your ideas for topics in the suggestion box.

HOMEWORK
★ ZONE ★
Please be quiet!



Back to School Night
September 28, 2005
Ms. Pappas

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO!



Agenda

1. Introductions

- Agenda Overview
- Sign up sheet for one-on-one meetings

2. Where are we going? (Goals for the Year)

- Social and academic readiness
 - Building a community of independent and collaborative learners
 - Literacy and Numeracy -
Laying the foundation for future achievement
- Sparking curiosity and desire to learn

3. How will we get there? (Our Plan of Action)

- Creative Curriculum
- Everyday Mathematics
- CMCD (Consistency Management/ Cooperative Discipline)
- Meeting every child's unique needs to move the whole class forward
 - Building on strengths and addressing weaknesses
 - **ELAS** – Early Learning Assessment System
- Our Partnership
 - Homework, Family Library, Buzz Board, and Attendance
 - Special Events – **Family Show and Tell (Friday, October 7)**
 - “Helpful Hints for Building Literacy Skills at Home”

4. Conclusion

- Questions/ Discussion
- **Updated Emergency Forms**

*Thank you again for your support!
I can already tell that with
all of us working together,
we will have a productive and exciting year*

MS. PAPPAS'S HELPFUL HINTS FOR BUILDING LITERACY SKILLS AT HOME



Enthusiasm for Reading and Writing is Key

1. Read to your child as much as possible

- Continue to take out books from our Family Lending Library
- Read the same book again and again if your child shows interest.

2. Expose your child to print wherever possible

- Point to labels on food, hair products, cleaning products, newspapers, magazines, words in commercials
- Wherever there is print there is a learning opportunity!**

3. Show your child everyday uses for writing wherever possible

- Whether you are writing a grocery list, composing a letter to a friend, or taking a phone message, try to share the experience with your child.
- You may want to have your child engage in the same activity along with you (ex. while you write the list, give your child a pen and paper to write his/her own list – some form of scribbling is expected and acceptable).
- Encourage your child to “write” as much as possible.

4. Dictate what your child says

- Have your child dictate a message or list to you. Make sure your child sees you write each word and sentence he/she says.
- If you are writing a statement your child makes to describe a picture he/she drew, be sure to ask your child if it is okay to write on the same paper as the drawing.

Ms. Pappas, Pre-K

Spring 2006

Daily Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:25-8:40	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:40-9:00	Independent Reading	Independent Reading	Independent Reading	Independent Reading	Independent Reading
9:00-9:30	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
9:30-10:20	World Language	Gym	9:30-10:00 Outdoor Choice Time (or auditorium) 10-10:20 Choice Time and Small Groups	Media - Library	9:30-10:00 Outdoor Choice Time (or auditorium) 10-10:20 Choice Time and Small Groups
10:20-11:10	Science	Choice Time and Small Groups	10:20-11:00 - Choice Time and Small Groups 11:00-11:10 - Whole Group Activity	Music	10:20-11:00 - Choice Time and Small Groups 11:00-11:10 - Whole Group Activity
11:20-11:50	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
11:50-12:25	11:50-12:00 - Read Aloud 12:00-12:25 - Nap	11:50-12:00 - Read Aloud 12:00-12:25 - Nap	11:50-12:00 Read Aloud 12:00-12:25 - Nap	11:50-12:00 Read Aloud 12:00-12:25 - Nap	11:50-12:00 Read Aloud 12:00-12:25 - Nap
12:25-1:15	12:25-12:45 - Nap 12:45-1:15 Snack & Story Time	12:25-12:45 - Nap 12:45-1:15 Snack & Story Time	12:25-12:45 - Nap 12:45-1:15 Snack & Read Aloud	12:25-12:45 - Nap 12:45-1:15 - Snack & Read Aloud	12:25-12:45 - Nap 12:45-1:15 Snack & Read Aloud
1:15-2:15	Choice Time and Small Groups Outdoor Free Choice Time when possible	Choice Time and Small Groups Outdoor Free Choice Time when possible	Choice Time and Small Groups	Choice Time and Small Groups	Choice Time and Small Groups
2:15-2:30	Clean up/ Question Reflection	Clean up/ Question Reflection	Clean up/ Question Reflection	Clean up/ Question Reflection	Clean up/ Question Reflection

****Math Time for Everyday Math is incorporated into Morning Meeting, Choice Time, Small Groups, or Snack time, depending on the activities for that particular day****

LONG TERM PLAN
2005-06

SOPHIA E. PAPPAS
PRE-K CLASS
NEWARK, NJ

KEY:
WORD WALL WORDS
LETTER
THEME
SMALL GROUP SKILL AREAS
ELAS (* = COLLECTION PD)
[Everyday Math](#)

SEPTEMBER 2005 – *WS, A, A, C* - RESPECT

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat./ Sun.
5	6	7	8	9	10
			WS – room, people # of Day Routine (WG)	WS – rules, room, people # Day, Partner Match (WG) SG: Name puzzle	11
Labor Day	NPS – Teachers Report	NPS – 1 st Day with Students			
12	13	14	15	16	17
WS – Conflict Res., finding names around room I, a SG – Name work (puzzles); Big Book Measuring Heights (PT) Building, Measuring (BA)	Hands Project – shared writing and hand prints (<i>Hands are not</i>) SG – Math diags.	<i>Sharing books</i> Coins in classroom (TG)	<i>Curious George</i> – class helpers Pattern Blocks (TG) **Job interviews**	Fun Friday Catch Up **job interviews**	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
<i>Peace Table - CR</i> I, a, am Patterns in a Rhyme (WG) Job Chart Routine (WG)	Position Word Game (WG) Big and Little Worms (TGA)	Tissue Collages (AA)	Simon Says for I-I (WG) Snack Time Routine	Fun Friday Catch Up	25
26	27	28	29	30	
I, am, a Listen & Count (WG, TG)	Eating to Zero (WG, SG)	Weather Obs. Routine (WG, PT) Feely Box (PT, TG)	Egg Carton Math (PT, TG)	**rotate toys & books Fun Friday Catch Up	

OCTOBER 2005 - *WS, LP, A, A* - RESPONSIBILITY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat./ Sun.
3 Families am, is Monthly Cal. Routine (WG) Ss PA/LI	4 Age Change (WG) Red and Not Red (TG) PA/LI	5 If you have (WG) PA/LI	6 Rings and Bracelets (AA) ELAS	7 Fun Friday Catch Up 1-1	8
10	11 Folktales Rr we, like Children Here Today (WG) Pattern Block/# cards (TG) LJ/WR (WW)	12 Shapes Outdoors (WG) LJ/WR(WW)	13 Halloween Faces (AA) ELAS	14 Fun Friday Catch Up 1-1	15
NPS - Closed - Columbus Day	18 Folktales we, like Tt PA/BP (rhyming books) Shape Pictures (TG)	19 NSP - Staff Development	20 ELAS Number Sculptures (TG)	21 PA/BP (rhyming books) Fun Friday Catch Up	22
17 Folktales we, like Tt PA/BP (rhyming books) Shape Pictures (TG)	25 LJ	26 LJ	27 ELAS	28 **rotate toys & books 1-1	23
24 Fall the Pp LI	31 are Cc				29
					30

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EXAMPLES

1. *Go Around Cup*

→ procedure for calling on students (using a cup of wooden sticks with their names on it to ensure that all students are picked)

→ IMS modification – instead of calling out the whole name I call out the beginning sound, the first letter, or a word that rhymes with that letter (e.g. saying /t/ for Tyrone – the students say Tyrone, I say, “or”, and they say Terrel).

2. *Getting my attention*

→ instead of raising hands I have the students make a certain letter with their fingers

3. *Calling students to line up*

→ I put the letter of the week in front of their name (rhyming and beginning sound)

4. *Lining Up*

→ I put a certain pattern on the squares (e.g. square, circle, triangle) or just numbers. Students know exactly where to stand, and the floor can be used as a game.

5. *Table Names*

→ I often call my students to the carpet by table names. We used the names of books, but you can rotate your table names with letters, shapes, colors, etc.

6. *Sitting on the rug*

→ The students' names are on pieces of masking tape. We refer to them when we are figuring out who is absent. Besides being a great tool for teaching how to sit on the rug, the names have helped with letter-sound recognition. Even my most struggling students can read their friends' names.

7. *Getting in the active listening position*

→ We use a simple rhyme (My hands and feet are folded, my back is straight and tall, my eyes are on my teacher, I make no noise at all). Since the students say it every day, it helps as a reference point for rhyming words.

8. *Getting their Attention*

→ counting up from 1 → 5 with explicit instructions (1. Stop; 2. Be Quiet; 3. Hands Folded, 4. Eyes on Ms. Pappas; 5. Listen).

→ can be changed to teach other areas (e.g. letters with letter cards)

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SAMPLE

1. Instructional Objectives Basic Skills/Content

- ABCs
- #, rote counting
- phonological awareness
 - Beginning sounds
 - Rhyming
- colors
- shapes

2. Management Systems

- students lining up
- calling students to line up
- students getting my attention
- calling on students
- organization of student seating (tables)
- sitting at the rug (location, how to sit)
- transitions (eg. independent reading to circle time, returning from bathroom)

3. Instructional Management System (IMS)

- Using Go Around Cup with beginning sound, letter, or word that rhymes with name
- Calling students to line up with same approach
- Color card behavior system
- counting up and down for transitions
- making letters with fingers instead of hand raising

FRY'S FIRST 100 SIGHT WORDS

the	or	will	number
of	one	up	no
and	had	other	way
a	by	about	could
to	words	out	people
in	but	many	my
is	not	then	than
you	what	them	first
that	all	these	water
it	were	so	been
he	we	some	called
was	when	her	who
for	your	would	oil
on	can	make	sit
are	said	like	now
as	there	him	find
with	use	into	long
his	an	time	down
they	each	has	day
I	which	look	did
at	she	two	get
be	do	more	come
this	how	write	made
have	their	go	may
from	if	see	part

Source: <http://rbeaudoin333.homestead.com/files/first.pdf>, accessed 6/1/06.

READ ALOUD TRANSCRIPT

The Sun, The Wind, and Tashira (Hottentot folktale from Africa)

Topic Study: Wind

Focus: Making connections to past discussions and activities, during the wind topic study, and relating the story to their own lives (higher order thinking questions).

Pre-reading

MP: Before we start reading, let's make some predictions about what the book will be about. I know sometimes we use the pictures. Today we will use the title.¹ Now, where is the title? Is it here? (I point to the pictures or the back of the book).

Students: No or it's on the front cover.

MP: Oh, wait a minute. I think I made a mistake. I was looking at the pictures, but I need to read the ----- (as I gesture to the students).

Students: Words! (you can also call on an individual student or have a lower level student come up and point to the title).²

MP: *The Sun, The Wind, and Tashira* (as I sweep my finger from left to right across the title). Hmm, the sun, the wind, and Tashira. Well, we know about the sun and the wind, who do you think Tashira is? (wait for a response) Make a "T" for Tashira with your fingers when you are ready to respond.

If a child who can speak tries to just point I usually say something like, "Use your words to tell me who she is," in order to encourage language development. In the beginning of the year or just depending on the child, he might say, "The girl." I would then ask a follow up question like, "What does the girl look like?" or "What will happen to her, the sun, and the wind?"

Student: The wind's gonna blow her like I blow the boats.

MP: That's right, I remember you blowing the boats during Choice Time. Great connection. Give yourself a connection kiss. Now, what area was that?

Student: (no response)

¹ You can also invest your students further in this process by introducing strategies for making predictions (e.g., using the pictures or the title) and then having them choose which strategy you will use on a particular day. This approach would also increase their metacognitive skills, as they would be able to explain how they generated a prediction and not just the prediction itself.

² I of course built the students up to this point. Each skill, whether it be how physically to handle the book, how to sweep your finger across the page, or how to make connections between characters and their own lives, has been taught through modeling and questioning during Read Alouds and small reading groups throughout the year.

MP: I know, it was Dramatic Play or was it Cooking?

Student: No, Sand and Water!

MP: Oh, ok, so may be the wind will blow her, but why? Why would the wind do that to Tashira?

Student: Maybe the wind won't play with her.

MP: Ok, well let's find out. What should I do if I want to find out what happens?

Students: Turn the page or read the story.

MP: Ok, now here is the, well, let's see it says, *The Sun, the Wind, and Tashira*. I remember that is the title. So this must be the -----

Students: Title page.

MP: Great! And this is the dedication. The book is for Ani.

Your questions will vary according to the focus of your read aloud and the ability levels of your students.

Examples of questions and think aloud remarks while I read the story:

MP: The wind blowing the clouds reminds me of another book. I remember the wind blowing other things. What was the wind blowing in that book?

Depending on the time of year, you will have to do more or less thinking aloud. In the beginning, I might have to point to the other book directly and provide some examples. Towards the middle or end of the year, the students should be making those connections without me thinking aloud.

Student: That reminds me of the book with the wind blowing.

MP: Great connection. Give yourself a connection kiss. What was the wind blowing?

Student: The balloon and the wig.

Student: Oh, and the things got all mixed up.

MP: Great! I can't wait to see what the wind does next in this book. What should I do to find out?

Students: Turn the page.

In the beginning of the year I would do things like turn the page the wrong way or turn my body around and have the students correct me. Towards the middle and end of the year, I had my student who cannot articulate words point to pictures or turn the page for me.

MP: Wow! I can't believe Tashira is going to live with the sun. Would you like to live with the sun?

Students – no response

MP: Well, let me think. The sun feels very, cold?

Students: No, hot!

MP: Okay, so would I want to live right next to something that is hot, like fire?

Student: No, because you could burn yourself.

Student: I would not like to leave my family.

Student: My grandma likes to eat fish.

Many times, especially in the beginning of the year, students may respond with an off topic response.

MP: Mmm, I enjoy fish too, especially on a warm summer day when my brother grills fresh salmon. Does your grandma like to be outside in the hot sun?

Student: Yes.

MP: So do you think she would want to live with the sun like Tashira.

Student: Yes.

MP: I agree. Now let's continue.

After reading the whole story, you can continue the discussion with general questions like, What was your favorite part and why? You can also use storytelling props like puppets or flannel board pieces to have the children re-tell the story, either in whole group or as a center activity in the Library Area. If I am having them make connections, we might pass around a puppet of the wind or Tashira and have the students share a time when the wind blew something in their lives or something they did in the class that makes them think of what happened in the story.

Sample Anecdotes

DP = Dramatic Play

CT = Choice Time

MP = Ms. Pappas (me)

JL = student's initials

G&R = Greetings & Readings (breakfast, independent reading and 1-1 time)

1-1 = one on one time with me, usually when I have planned something specific to address a need highlighted in their individual Action Plans

MK = student's initials

MH = student's initials

SG = small group

DA= Discovery Area

SC = Student's name

WS = Work Sample

RA = Read Aloud

TS = Topic Study

RP = Student's initials

WG = Whole Group

AS = student's initials

DP, CT am 4/24/06

MP: Where are the vegetables?

JL: Here (JL pointed to the picture on the container)

MP: How do you know?

JL: the v (pointed to the v in the word vegetables)

MP: V like----

JL: van

MP: Oh, great. I want to make vegetable soup. Where are the recipe books?

JL took out the recipe books.

*Literacy Expectations covered: Listening (1), Conversing (2), Print awareness (3a), Phonological awareness (3c).

G&R Letter Game, 1-1, am 4/10/06

MP: What is this? (as I point to a letter in our game)

MK: I gotta look for it (looked around the room)

Here Ms. Pappas (pointed to T on transportation prop box and then found Tt word chart)
Toilet, toilet /t/ /t/

MP: Great job, do you know what the letter is called?

MK: no

MP: it's T

MK: You know tiger starts with T. My mother told me and I listen to her. And Ll starts with lunch (made the letter Ll with his finger like we do at Morning Meeting)

Literacy Expectations covered: Listening (1), Conversing (2), Print awareness (3a), Phonological awareness (3c).

G&R am 4/10/06

MH came up to me with the transportation book holding it the right way.

MH: Look Ms. Pappas I found a helicopter. This is a dirt bike.

(MH pointed to each and then turned the pages for his friends)

MP: Which page should we read first?

(MH pointed to the left page then the right page).

MH: Look there are ABCs (flipped to the back, index).

MH started singing the ABC song while he pointed to each letter.

Literacy Expectations covered: Listening (1), Conversing (2), Print awareness (3a), Knowledge and Awareness of books (3b)

WS – would be attached in the portfolio

DA, CT, SG, am 4/25/06

After planting a seed with the group, wrote in small guided writing group in response to directions.

SC spelled can for a friend during guided writing (“c-a-n”)

MP: What do you want to write?

SC: I was planting the flower.

MP: Ok, so how should you get started?

SC: I (he wrote I)

SC: was (wrote w, then stopped)

MP: Ok, I was?

SC: planting

MP: What do you hear in planting?

SC: P (wrote p)

MP: anything else in planting?

SC: T (wrote t)

SC did the same for flower (wrote flwr)

Literacy Expectations covered: Listening (1), Conversing (2), Print awareness (3a), Phonological Awareness (3c); Writing (4)

RA, TS, WG – Wind 3/28/06

MP: Would you like to play in the rain?

RP: No, grandma don't like rain. She take an umbrella so she won't get wet.

Literacy Expectations covered: Listening (1), Conversing (2), Knowledge and Enjoyment of Books (3b)

CT, am 3/10/06

AS passing out cards for her job

AS gave the cards to the right friends; when she didn't know one, I said the friend's name and she gave it to them.

She gave Terrel Tyrone's card first. Then, her friend's said that wasn't the right one and she gave the card to Tyrone.

Literacy Expectations covered: Listening (1), Print awareness (3a)

RA, WG, PM – *Click Clack Moo*, 3/6/06

Post-reading

UC: Ms. Pappas the ducks became like to cows.

MP: How so.

UC: (used his fingers to type) B/c the cows went click clack moo, click clack moo, clickety clack moo, then the ducks went, click clack quack...quack).

Literacy Expectations covered: Listening (1), Conversing (2), Knowledge and Enjoyment of Books (3b)

Individual Action Plan

Shantell

December 1, 2005

General Summary

Strengths

- Identifying her name
- writing in interest areas (e.g. Dramatic Play)
- starting to say certain words (e.g., I, yes)
- book handling – holding the book, turning the pages
- following oral and modeled directions
- whole group participation - clapping and making sounds during songs

Target Areas

- letter identification
- print awareness (reading and writing) – print in environment, using words, not pictures when “reading a story”
- language development

What I plan to do:

- 1-1 and small group focused on letter identification (games)
- use the sound order provided by the speech therapist to facilitate language development
- point out print around us – how we label various toys

What you can do:

- point out print around you - on food boxes, on TV, and in newspapers
- point to letters as you read to Shantell – encourage her to find a certain letter
- use the speech order form I gave you to work on certain sounds with Shantell

Comments/Questions:

Individual Action Plan

Keisha

December 1, 2005

General Summary

Strengths

- Letter-sound connections (e.g., I hear the R in rabbit)
- rhyming, breaking down syllables in words
- Writing in interest areas (e.g., writing messages in Dramatic Play)
- writing conventional letter forms

Target Areas

- Listening skills – during story time/ whole group in general
- incorporating topic study into play time
- print awareness (reading and writing) – print in environment, using words, not pictures when “reading a story”

What I plan to do:

- work with Keisha 1-1 and in small groups on reading and responding to stories (so that I can give her more attention and build up her attention span)
- incorporate stories that she really likes
- point out print around us – how we label various toys
- ask questions during interest area time that focus her attention on connections between the current topic study and what she is doing in the interest areas

What you can do:

- ask focused comprehension questions – build up her attention span gradually
- model how to think about what happened in a story
- point out print around you - on food boxes, on TV, and in newspapers

Comments/Questions:

Individual Action Plan

Shawn

December 1, 2005

General Summary

Strengths

- picking up on letter forms – beginning to write letters
- developing stronger listening skills – staying on topic with answers to questions at the rug
- overall – active listening at the rug, participating in whole group activities
- >clapping 2-3 syllable words
- beginning to recognize his name and follow some print with his finger

Target Areas

- print awareness (e.g. he can write letters but he cannot identify them or provide any kind of meaning)
- rhyming
 - book handling
- comprehension questions – stories

What I plan to do:

- pointing out print around us – how we label various toys
- Letter Identification games – bingo, songs
- nursery rhymes in a small group with Shawn and others
- break down comprehension questions in a small group and one on one

What you can do:

- model using writing for everyday uses – (e.g., invite Shawn to watch you make a grocery list or take down a phone message)
- point out print around you - on food boxes, on TV, and in newspapers
- read to Shawn - take out books from our Family Library on a daily basis

Comments/Questions:

Individual Action Plan

Tyrone

December 1, 2005

General Summary

Strengths

- listening skills – Tyrone has become an active listener on the rug – He makes connections between books and incorporates what I read on the rug into his play time.
- letter-sound connections with the letter T
- identifies his name and his friends' names
- beginning to write for various purposes in interest areas

Target Areas

- breaking down the syllables in words and rhyming
- writing for various purposes (e.g., making grocery lists or taking messages in Dramatic Play) on his own
 - print awareness (reading and writing) – print in environment, using words, not pictures when “reading a story”
 - letter identification

What I plan to do:

- more modeling, facilitation of interaction with various uses of print in interest areas (e.g., taking orders or messages in Dramatic Play)
- letter bingo and songs
- 1-1 and small group activities breaking down words with clapping and rhyming
- pointing out print around us – how we label various toys

What you can do:

- model using writing for everyday uses – (e.g., invite Tyrone to watch you make a grocery list or take down a phone message)
- point out print around you - on food boxes, on TV, and in newspapers
- sing nursery rhymes with Tyrone; play with words (e.g., water, pater, sater)
- point to letters and have him hunt for them as you read to Tyrone- encourage him to point to the words while you read (e.g., go through a favorite book looking for the letter Ss – say Ss each time you find one)

Comments/Questions:

INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLANS ELAS – COLLECTION PD 2 (EXCERPT)

Duante

- more modeling, facilitation of interaction with various uses of print in interest areas (e.g., taking orders or messages in Dramatic Play)
- more interactive writing – sentences

Shawn

- pointing out print around us – how we label various toys
- Letter Identification games – bingo, songs
- nursery rhymes in a small group with Shawn and others
- break down comprehension questions in a small group and one on one

Jamar

- work with him 1-1 on articulating his thoughts
- Letter Identification games – bingo, songs
- more modeling, facilitation of interaction with various uses of print in interest areas (e.g., taking orders or messages in Dramatic Play)
- pointing out print around us – how we label various toys
- nursery rhymes in a small group with Jamar and others
- break down comprehension questions in a small group and one on one

Terrel

- nursery rhymes in a small group with Terrel and others
- Letter Identification games – bingo, songs
- small group and 1-1 word with breaking down syllables in words
- more modeling, facilitation of interaction with various uses of print in interest areas (e.g., taking orders or messages in Dramatic Play)
- pointing out print around us – how we label various toys

Tamyra

- nursery rhymes and word families (e.g. –at family in a small group with Tamyra and others)
- more modeling, facilitation of interaction with various uses of print in interest areas (e.g., taking orders or messages in Dramatic Play)
- 1-1 and small group activities breaking down words and writing sentences
- model how to respond to open ended critical thinking questions and break them down for her
- pointing out print around us – how we label various toys

Tyrone

- more modeling, facilitation of interaction with various uses of print in interest areas (e.g., taking orders or messages in Dramatic Play)
- letter bingo and songs
- 1-1 and small group activities breaking down words with clapping and rhyming
- pointing out print around us – how we label various toys

Keisha

- work with Keisha 1-1 and in small groups on reading and responding to stories (so that I can give her more attention and build up her attention span)
- incorporate stories that she really likes
- point out print around us – how we label various toys
- ask questions during interest area time that focus her attention on connections between the current topic study and what she is doing in the interest areas

Shantell

- 1-1 and small group focused on letter identification (games)
- use the sound order provided by the speech therapist to facilitate language development
- point out print around us – how we label various toys

Individual Action Plans

Everyday Math

(Excerpt)

Duante

- move on to comparing objects by size, height, weight, and length (e.g., which is bigger, taller, heavier, etc.)
- Addition and subtraction stories (e.g., I have three bears. You give me two. How many do I have now?)

Shawn

- sorts and classifies objects by their attributes (E.g., Which blocks are the same? Why did you put them this way? How are they the same or different?)
- move on to comparing objects by size, height, weight, and length (e.g., which is bigger, taller, heavier, etc.)

Jamar

- recognizing numerals (1-10)
- counting 1-10 objects or sounds (e.g., How many pennies are in this cup?)
- Forming groups of 1-10 (count out 8 crackers for this table)
- Numbers to groups (matching the number to a group of objects – e.g., number concentration game matching numeral to card with certain number of stickers)
- Comparison (more, less, or equal)
- recognizes, copies, and extends patterns
- 2-D shapes

Terrel

- Comparison (more, less, or equal)
- recognizes, copies, and extends patterns
- 2-D shapes

Tamyra

- move on to comparing objects by size, height, weight, and length (e.g., which is bigger, taller, heavier, etc.)
- Addition and subtraction stories (e.g., I have three bears. You give me two. How many do I have now?)

Tyrone

- recognizing numerals (1-10)
- counting 1-10 objects or sounds (e.g., How many pennies are in this cup?)
- Forming groups of 1-10 (count out 8 crackers for this table)
- Numbers to groups (matching the number to a group of objects – e.g., number concentration game matching numeral to card with certain number of stickers)
- Comparison (more, less, or equal)
- recognizes, copies, and extends patterns
- 2-D shapes

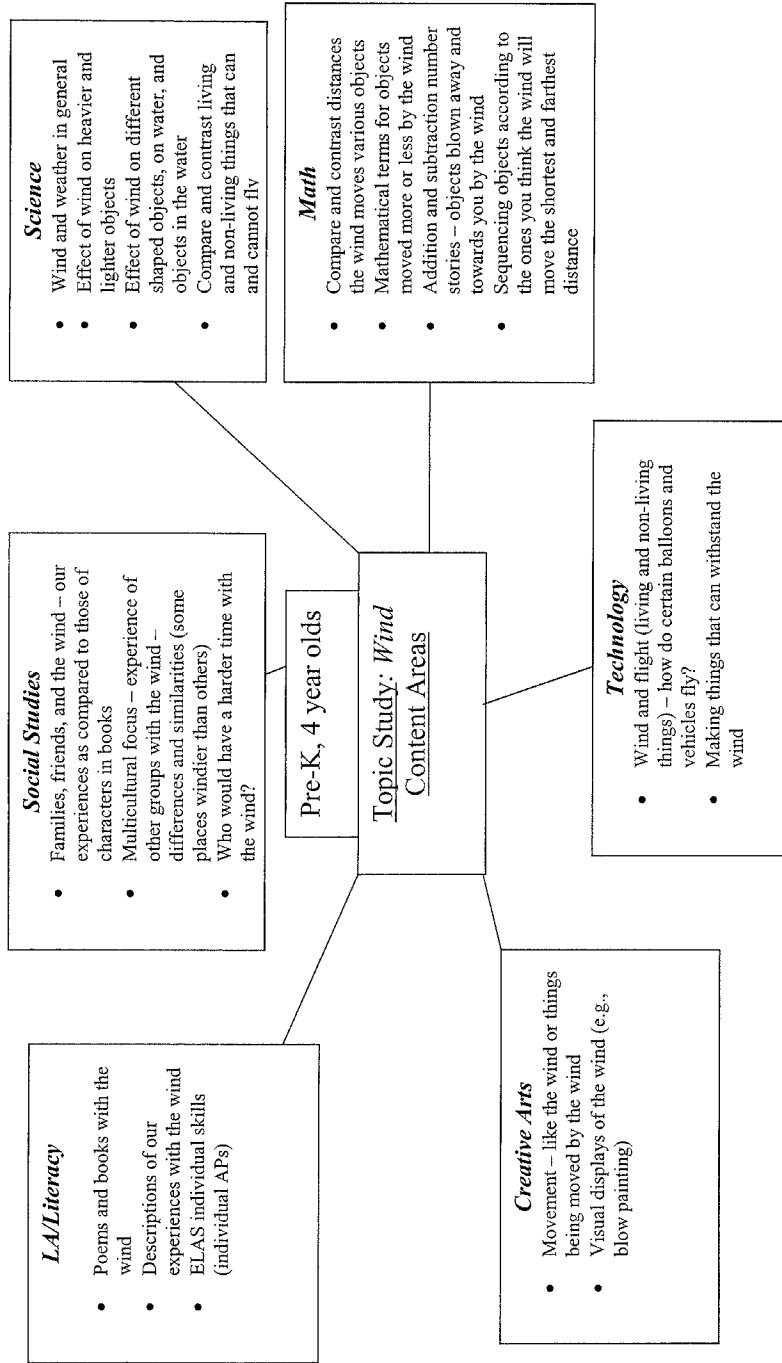
Keisha

- recognizing numerals (1-10)
- counting 1-10 objects or sounds (e.g., How many pennies are in this cup?)
- Forming groups of 1-10 (count out 8 crackers for this table)
- Numbers to groups (matching the number to a group of objects – e.g., number concentration game matching numeral to card with certain number of stickers)
- Comparison (more, less, or equal)
- recognizes, copies, and extends patterns
- sorts and classifies objects by their attributes (E.g., Which blocks are the same? Why did you put them this way? How are they the same or different?)

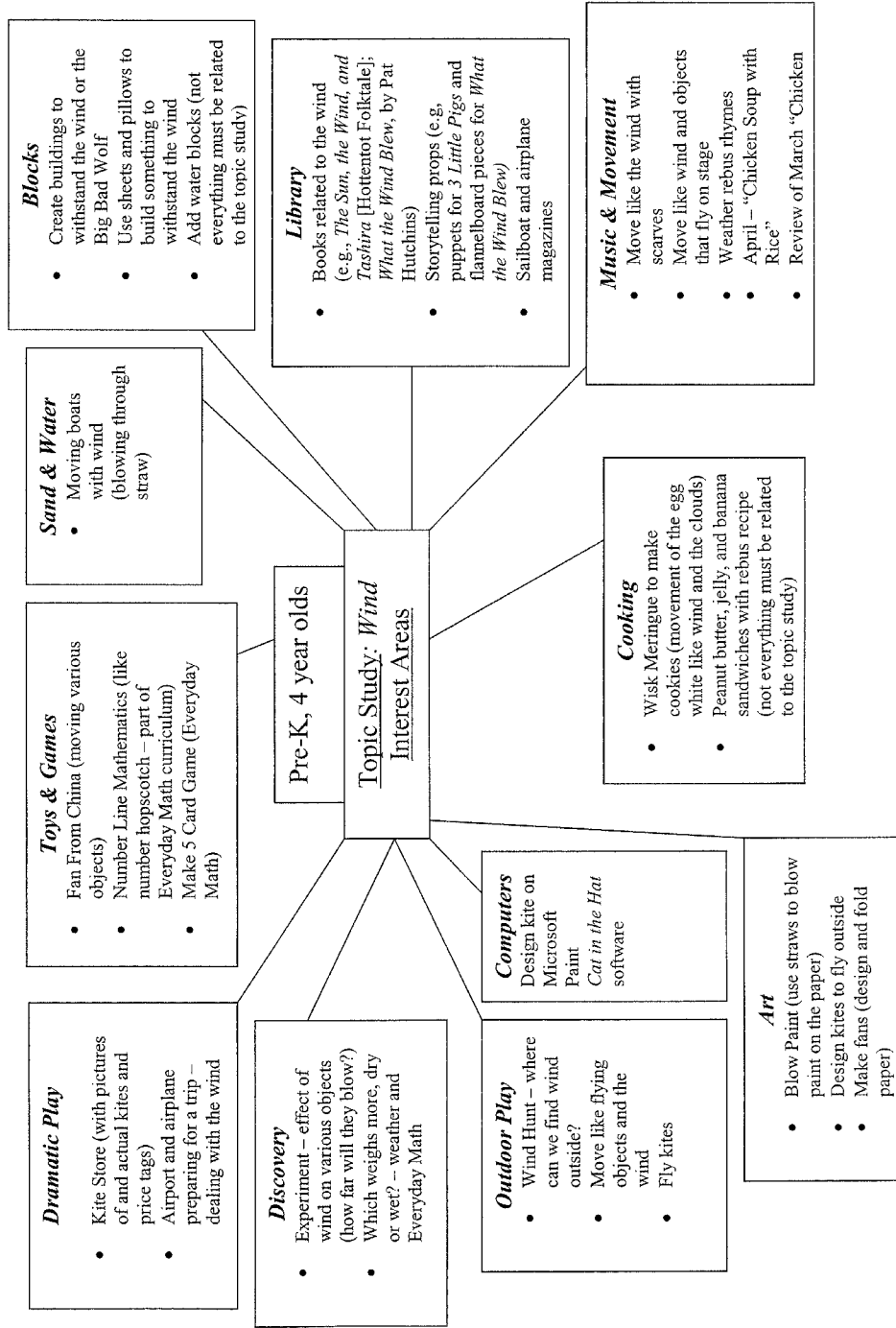
Shantell

- recognizing numerals (1-10)
- counting 1-10 objects or sounds (e.g., How many pennies are in this cup?)
- Forming groups of 1-10 (count out 8 crackers for this table)
- Numbers to groups (matching the number to a group of objects – e.g., number concentration game matching numeral to card with certain number of stickers)
- Comparison (more, less, or equal)
- recognizes, copies, and extends patterns
- 2-D shapes

CONTENT AREA FOR WIND TOPIC STUDY (STEP 1)



INTEREST AREA WEB FOR WIND TOPIC STUDY (STEP 2)



TWO WEEK PLAN (STEP 3)
Planning Changes to the Environment
 Teacher: Ms.Pappas Week One Study/Project: Wind

<p>BLOCKS</p> <p>→ buildings to withstand the wind → add water blocks</p>	<p>DRAMATIC PLAY</p> <p>→ set up like a store, restaurant, or type of transportation, depending on their interest - emphasis on role playing and language development</p>	<p>MUSIC/MOVEMENT</p> <p>→ classical music and scarves (wind dances) → numeral song to the tune of "Farmer and the Dell"</p>	<p>"TO DO" LIST</p> <p>→ take out water blocks from the closet → buy/ask around for scarves for M&M</p>
<p>ART</p> <p>→ wind painting (blowing air through a straw onto fingerpaint) → monster handprints</p>	<p>LIBRARY</p> <p>→ wind and some spring books</p>	<p>COOKING</p> <p>→ whisk egg whites to make meringue</p>	<p>→ buy/take out straws for wind-painting → take out spring books → buy materials for meringue → call Jeralyn for recipe</p>
<p>SAND/WATER</p> <p>→ Boats in the water - blow wind with and without straws (making waves)</p>	<p>TOYS/GAMES</p> <p>→ fan from China → number line mathematics</p>	<p>OUTDOORS</p> <p>→ wind hunt - where do we see wind? How do we know it's there?</p>	<p>→ bring in fan from China → invite families to come in</p>
<p>COMPUTERS</p> <p>→ explore text box on Microsoft Paint (typing their names and Word Wall words)</p>	<p>DISCOVERY/SCIENCE</p> <p>→ test various objects - how far the wind will blow them?</p>	<p>FAMILY/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</p> <p>→ Invite family members to play with us or read to the class</p>	

Planning Changes to the Environment
Teacher: Ms.Pappas Week One Study/Project: Wind

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Group Time (songs, stories, games, discussions, etc.)	<p>TLWBAT describe the wind using their five senses by experiencing a simulated wind tunnel (fan on their faces), discussing how they experienced the wind with their five senses with a partner, and then with the group (think, pair, share) onto an illustrated five senses graphic organizer.</p> <p>EXPECTATION(S): LA/Lit: 1.2, 2.1, 2.4 Science: 1.2, 3.4</p> <p>*Ee- making with fingers to get my attention*</p>	<p>TLWBAT predict which items they think could be moved by the "wind" by trying to blow away a few items as a class, discussing why some items moved while some did not, and then identifying additional objects which they think stronger wind (the fan) might move the following day - predictions on a chart.</p> <p>EXPECTATION(S): Science: 1.2, 1.3, 3.4 LA/Lit: 2.7, 4.4</p>	<p>TLWBAT compare and contrast those objects that the wind (our fan) could and could not move by testing each object and then discussing the observed results.</p> <p>EXPECTATION(S): Science: 3.4, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5 LA/Lit: 2.3</p> <p>"I spy" - emphasis on reviewing shapes (I plan on using the game as a transition activity)</p> <p>EXPECTATION(S): LA/Lit: 2.4 Math: 2.1</p>	<p>TLWBAT identify an object in the room that the wind will not blow away by holding an object it did blow away and an object it did not from the previous two days, reviewing the concept of weight, searching for an object with a partner, and then testing the object with the group.</p> <p>EXPECTATION(S): LA/Lit: 2.7, 2.1 Science: 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 3.4</p>	<p>TLWBAT show how the wind moves by listening to a few poems about the wind and then dancing like the wind using scarves and classical music.</p> <p>EXPECTATION(S): LA/Lit: 1.3, 2.6 Creative Arts: 2.1, 2.3</p> <p>Weekly Sharing EXPECTATION(S): Social: 1.5, 6.4 LA/L: 1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 2.4</p>

<p>Story Time</p>	<p><i>Wind</i> (big book) → focus on wind and the five senses (refer to chart from the morning) EXPECTATION(S): LA/Lit: 1.2, 2.1, 2.4 Science: 3.4</p> <p><i>Rain Talk</i> → emphasis on sound of the rain for April Bulletin Board rain/ wind stories EXPECTATION(S): LA/Lit: 1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.12 Science: 3.4</p>	<p><i>One Stormy Night</i> → focus on wind and our own experiences with wind outside → we record our own stormy night sounds to go along with the story EXPECTATION(S): LA/Lit: 2.6, 3.11 Science: 3.4</p> <p><i>Lots and Lots of Zebra Stripes</i> → focus on patterns (Math Read Aloud) EXPECTATION(S): Math: 3.5 Science: 2.1</p>	<p><i>Gilberto and the Wind</i> → compare and contrast the experience of the main character with the wind and our own experiences EXPECTATION(S): Science: 3.4 LA/Lit: 3.11, 3.12, 2.1</p> <p><i>Bear in a Square</i> → Math read aloud – focus on shapes and rhyming</p>	<p><i>The Sun, the Wind, and Tashira</i> (African folktale) → focus on effect of wind on land and other objects EXPECTATION(S): Science: 3.4, 2.2 LA/Lit: 3.11</p> <p><i>The North Wind Doth Blow</i> → reinforce focus of the Tashira (African folktale) EXPECTATION(S): Science: 3.4, 2.2 LA/Lit: 3.11</p>	<p><i>Dream Dancer</i> → focus on movements associated with the wind (like the ballerina in the story) EXPECTATION(S): LA/Lit: 3.11, 2.6</p>
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<p>Small-Group Activities</p>	<p>TLWBAT identify the beginning letter in various words by reading a sight word reader in a guided reading group and matching up words with pictures from the book using the first letter of the word as a clue. EXPECTATION(S): LALit: 3.8, 3.4, 3.13</p> <p>TLWBAT determine whether they have more or less of a certain number than a partner by playing a Two-Handed adding game in which two children hold up fingers on both hands, add the two together, watch the spinner go on more or less, and take a counter if their number of fingers is more or less than the other person. EXPECTATION(S): LALit: 2.4 Math: 1.1, 1.8, 1.6</p>	<p>TLWBAT compare and contrast the distance wind blows various objects by going through the scientific method in the Discovery area using a selected group of heavier and lighter objects (making and recording predictions, observations, and conclusions). EXPECTATION(S): Math: 2.2, 2.3 Science: 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 3.4</p> <p>TLWBAT determine whether they have more or less of a certain number than a partner by playing a Two-Handed adding game. EXPECTATION(S): LALit: 2.4 Math: 1.1, 1.8, 1.6</p>	<p>TLWBAT determine what various words say when specific letters are changed by playing a letter game called “What the Wind Blew” in which the teacher uses magnetic letters to display a word and then the group figures out what words are made when various letters are changed. EXPECTATION(S): LALit: 3.4, 3.6, 3.13 Science: 3.4</p> <p>TLWBAT determine whether they have more or less of a certain number than a partner by playing a Two-Handed adding game. EXPECTATION(S): LALit: 2.4 Math: 1.1, 1.8, 1.6</p>	<p>TLWBAT describe how they will plan to go away on a spring trip by discussing and recording lists of what they will need and how they will get there and then packing up to go on the trip in Dramatic Play. EXPECTATION(S): LALit: 2.7, 3.3, 4.1</p> <p>**repeated Math small group or Everyday Math activity – groups formed according to need**</p>	<p>TLWBAT create rhyming books by singing various nursery rhymes, reviewing a rhyming game, and then making each page in the book a rhyming pair by selecting from a variety of pictures at the table. EXPECTATION(S): LALit: 3.8, 3.14 Creative Arts: 2.1</p> <p>**repeated Math small group or Everyday Math activity – groups formed according to need**</p>
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<p>Special Activities (field trips, special events)</p>	<p>Science</p>	<p>Tyrone</p>	<p>Tamyra, Shawn</p>	<p>Shantell, Terrel, Duante</p>	<p>Keisha, Jamar</p>
<p>ELAS</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>
<p>Ms. Franklin's Assignments</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>	<p>→ prepare and serve breakfast and lunch → monitor the children, encouraging writing in all centers while I work in Small Groups and take anecdotal notes for ELAS</p>

Daily Lesson Plan/Flow Chart
Sophia Pappas
Monday, March 27, 2006

ELAS – work on for this month**

*******Be Patient and Positive*******

Monday, March 27, 2006

Homework: Math Homelink; Windy Day with Family Member picture

8:25-8:35

Greetings

- Students Arrive & Check In Personal Belongings – WASH HANDS
- Welcome with families

8:35-9:00

Breakfast

- students eat breakfast at their desk; I circulate to talk to them

→Greetings & Readings – **“Big Backyard” (new magazine), our weekends, the wind**

→Math Games –Tyrone, Jamar (patterns); letter ID with movement; Word Wall cards – Tyrone, Jamar

→*Special Guest – Ms. Jones*****

- Everyday Math routines – calendar, weather

9:00-9:30

****Gathering Circle - Ee (letter of the week); with, have (word wall words)*

- rhyme for sitting on the rug

My hands and feet are folded/ My back is straight and tall/ My eyes are on my teacher/ I make no noise at all. - we broke it down by verse and did together the first day of school

- Name chart for who is here with "The More We Get Together" -

beginning sounds (I say the name and you say the sound)

- ***Go over schedule*** - mess up on purpose**

-->**Attendance Equation (# of boys and #of girls)**

→Ee words (make the letter Ee with your fingers)

Everyday Math→*Stand up/ sit down; turn your bodies around (for the next part)*

- # of the Day Routine

- Weather Routine

- Calendar routine – just point out date change (time permitting)**

Shared Writing:

Wind - 1) review of five senses (game)→2) simulated wind tunnel (fan)→3)describe the wind

Modeled Writing:

Daily message **TOL (Think out loud): When we read and when we write, the print goes from left to right; Days of the Week Song**

→(TOL about the wind in terms of their responses) I have so much fun in the wind with my friends. The wind sounds like _____. The wind feels like _____. I hope it is windy today.

→RT – Chicken Soup with Rice – pick a windy one

9:30-10:20 – Ms. Clarke

10:20-11:10 – Science with Ms. Wright (probably not)

****Introduce Writing, Writing Everywhere****

10:20-11:15 *Interest Areas* *****Small Group (SG) –NDS, AH, MP, SC – guided reading (sight word book)→match the picture with the word (making letter-sound connections)**
→Circle with work choice board
→Blocks Area – stress buildings that can withstand strong winds; add water blocks
→Dramatic Play – role and language development (store, restaurant, transportation)
→Toys & Games – fan from China – used to move toys - compare the distances different objects move (wind); number line math
→Discovery Area – test various objects – how far will the wind (students blowing them) move them – mark on chart paper (vocab – heavier, lighter, longer, shorter)
→Computer – text box on Microsoft Paint (words and names)
→Cooking – meringue
→Library – wind books, some spring books
→ Art Area – wind painting, monster handprints
→ Sand & Water – boats in water – making wind by blowing with and without straws
→Music & Movement – wind movement with scarves

***** ELAS- follow around room, APs, Everyday Math Assessments******

11:15-11:25 – Clean up and wash up for lunch

11:30-11:50 *Lunch* - circulate to each table, inquire about weekend and school day thus far

11:55-12:05 **→WW word panel cards and Build a Man**

→Counting with looking at fingers

→*Wind Talk* - focus on the wind and the five senses from the morning

12:05-12:50 *Nap*

12:50-1:00 *Wake up time* (Motown and scarf movement)+ *Musical Word Wall Word Chairs*

1:00-1:10 *Snack* - **Snack Time Routine with managers**

1:10-1:30 *Rain Talk* + poem from “Big Backyard” magazine- sounds of the rain
→*Interactive Writing*: we list words to describe the rain

1:30-2:20 PM Choice Time – WA, DA, T&G, LA
SG with Ms. Pappas – **SG – NDS, AH, MP, SC – 2 handed adding game**
→Everyone else – math games and patterns (Ms. Franklin)
→After my small group, I will invite children to write and to draw with me about the rain (independent writing)

2:20-2:25 Clean up (with song)

2:25-2:30 *Question/Reflection*

2:30 Dismissal

*******REMIND FAMILIES TO HAVE THE STUDENTS WEAR SNEAKERS FOR GYM -**
*******FAMILY LIBRARY WITH STICKER SYSTEM**