

Section 5: Implementing the Gee Whiz Curriculum



Description and Use of Components
Included in the Gee Whiz Curriculum

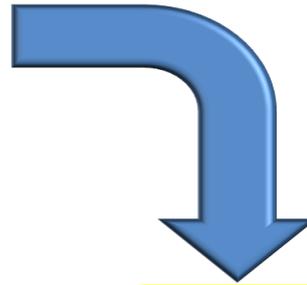
Getting Started

At GWE, we want to make the program as easy as possible to implement. We recognize that educators of young children are extremely busy people with little time for reading or planning. With that in mind, using the program is truly a three-step process.

Step 1 - Get Ready!

Start by browsing through the Teaching Guides. This will give you a good overview of the entire month.

- Prepare the story props. Directions are provided in the guide to help you.
- Do you have any books that relate to the theme? Check out our handy Book List, found in the back of each Teaching Guide and then try to locate some of those books. Your local library is a great resource!
- Does the theme lend itself to any field trips or visitors? Start planning those activities now.
- If working with a group...do any of the children or their families have a special interest or knowledge of the topic? Invite them to share!



Step 2 - Get Set!

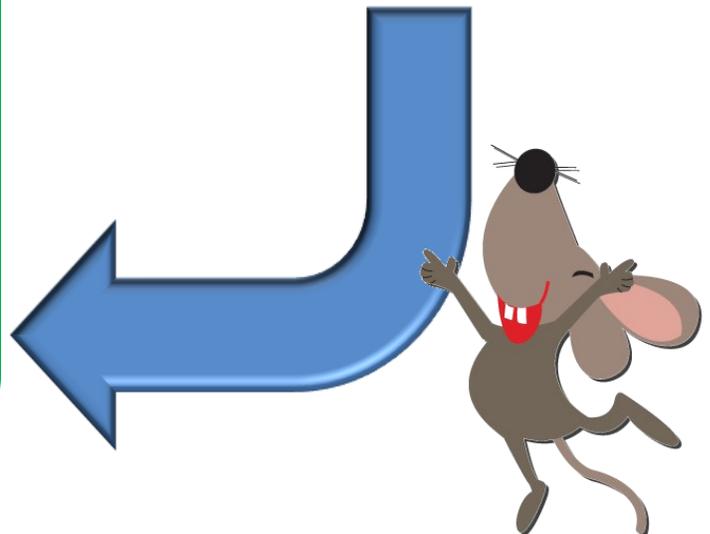
Next, prepare for your first day.

- Read the activities planned for the day and preview the ones for tomorrow.
- Which activities do you think will work well? Do you need to make any changes or adaptations? Now is a good time to consider how you could individualize.
- Think about ways you could expand upon the daily plans. What other activities might be enjoyable?
- Gather the materials you will need to implement the activities you chose to do as well as any you chose to add. **Materials listed in red are ones you may a little more time to collect or prepare.**

Step 3 - Go!

This is the BEST part...teaching!

- Have fun as you implement the activities. Your attitude and excitement will rub off on them!
- Make note of activities that were successful and keep doing them! Remember...just because the plans end that day does not mean the activity needs to.
- At the end of the day, evaluate. What went well? What did not? What would you change if you did the activity again?
- Also, did the activities spawn interest in other areas? If so, plan activities on your own to incorporate those interests.



Curriculum Components

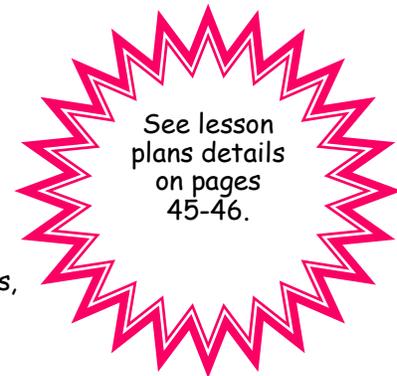
The program contains many components that all work together in a comprehensive way. All components are digital files available to Paid Subscribers on our website www.geewhizeducation.com. The files are presented in a PDF format. This means you will need to have Adobe Reader installed on your computer in order to read the files. If you do not have Adobe, no worries...a link is available on our website where you can download this PDF reader for free.

Teaching Guides

Each month includes two Teaching Guides. These guides contain activities centered around two "mini units" that complement each other. You may choose to print both guides at the same time, at different times, or just view online. Each guide contains 10 days of activities designed for ALL ages (infant-toddler-preschool & school-age). The daily plans include an Exploring Together experience, 2 small group experiences (toddler through preschool), and an infant experience. You will find experiences for school-age children in the back of the guide.

Here is a list of the components included in each Teaching Guide:

- 10 days of daily activity plans
- Experiences for school-age children
- Story text and prop preparation instructions (found only in the first unit of each month)
- Make It! Sheet directions
- School Readiness Activities (advanced preschoolers)
- Book List, Songs, Rhymes, Additional Teaching Materials, Patterns, etc.



DAY 2
Unit: Boxes, Blankets and Balls
Today's Focus: Fun with Packing Boxes
Developmental Areas Addressed Today:

Be Healthy & Safe!
Fresh air and sunshine are very important to the health and well-being of children and adults. Make sure to have outdoor play time every day...weather permitting.

Teaching Tip of the Day
Make saying, or singing, nursery rhymes a part of your daily routine. It is an excellent way to build language/literacy skills.

Transition Time
Have the children pretend to deliver packages as they move from activity to activity today.

Exploring Together: Deliver the Package!
(All ages, ♫ 🎨 ? 📄 📖 📏 📐 📏 ?)

Materials:
 Max the Mail Carrier puppet
 Packing/Mailing box with your address printed on the outside (You can get Priority Mail boxes for free at the post office. See link on page 2.)
 Recorded music

- Let's face it...children love to move! This experience incorporates music and movement in a fun way. As the children participate, they will also engage in dramatic play as they pretend to be mail carriers delivering packages. This would be a great experience to take outdoors if the weather is nice in your area.
- Sit on the floor with the Max the Mail Carrier puppet and one of the packing/mailing boxes. As the children gather, invite them to explore the box. What does the box look like? Are there any words written on the outside of the box? Challenge more advanced children to point out the words they see and then read them to them. Do they recognize any letters within those words?
- Encourage the children to talk about a time when they may have received a box like this in the mail. What was inside? Who sent the box? How do they think the box got from where it was sent to their own house? Use these discussions to help the children learn more about how boxes get from here to there. Sometimes they fly on airplanes, sometimes they go by truck and many times are delivered on foot. This would be a great time to involve Max in the discussion!
- Next, introduce the game, "Deliver the Package." Use a lawn chair, bucket or any other object to designate the turning around point (about 15 feet from the children). Then, turn on recorded music and give one child a box. Have this child pretend to be a mail carrier as he/she runs to the turning around point and then back to the group to "deliver" the package to the next person. Continue playing until each child has a turn to "deliver the package."

Today's Vocabulary
Use some of these words in conversations with children today!
package deliver weight address post office

As younger children participate in activities today, model language by...

- Using words, such as those listed above, while engaging children in conversations during the day's activities.
- Taking with children as they role-play a post office (p. 7).
- Describing children's actions as they use boxes to make music (p. 7).

Questions to Spur Thinking

- What do you see on the box? What do you think those words say?
- How does the mail carrier know where to deliver a package?
- How long do you think it would take to mail a package to (place)?
- Who would you like to mail a package to? What would you send them?

Packing and Shipping
(Toddlers-4 years, ♫ 🎨 ? 📄 📖 📏 📐 📏 ?)

Materials:
 Assorted boxes (see note on p. 2 about getting free boxes from the USPS)
 White tape, crayons/markers, issue paper, scissors

- Children use dramatic play to not only show what they know but also to build skills in many other areas. During this experience, the children can pretend to pack and ship surprises to family or friends. This is also an excellent way for them to build fine motor control. Because different developmental levels will approach this experience differently, we are providing options.
- **Toddlers/Two's/Young Threes:** This age group will just enjoy putting things in boxes and taking them out. As they play, be sure to not only describe the objects they choose as well as their actions. This would be an excellent time to reinforce the opposites in and out as well.
- **Older Threes/Fours/Advanced Preschoolers:** These children can choose items to pack and then tape up the boxes in preparation for "shipping" them. As they do so, your most advanced group can even write their addresses on the boxes or can dictate them for you to write. Be sure to talk about letter names and beginning sounds during this time. Once packed, the children can even pretend to deliver their packages. Then, they can unpack them and repack them again and again. If possible, keep this learning station open for this entire unit.

Pop!
(Infants, ♫ 🎨 ? 📄 📖 📏 📐 📏 ?)

Materials:
 Box and plush animal

- **Reciting rhymes** is a wonderful way of exposing infants to new language and vocabulary. Joking action makes the rhyme more engaging and also challenges the infant to use higher senses.
- Have the infant sit beside you (if he/she is able to do so) or hold him/her in your lap. Put the box in front of you. Recite the rhyme and then make the animal pop out of the box at the corresponding time.

What is in the box?
What is in the box?
I will count and you will see...
What is in the box?
Pop! ... 3 ...

Day 2 - Center/Small Group Activities

Questions to Spur Thinking

- Tell me about what you chose to pack and ship.
- What technique did you find worked best for using the box to make music?

Banging on Boxes
(Toddlers-4 years, ♫ 🎨 ? 📄 📖 📏 📐 📏 ?)

Materials:
 Assorted boxes
 Plastic or wooden cooking spoons

- Using every day items in different ways is a wonderful way for children to think outside the box and use problem-solving skills. During this experience, the children will do all of these things while building fine motor control and eye-hand coordination at the same time. In addition, the children will have the opportunity to make and test predictions as well.
- Set out the boxes as well as the plastic and wooden cooking spoons. As children show interest in these materials, engage them in conversations. Challenge them to use the boxes to make music. Some children may choose to bang on the boxes with the spoons while others may choose to use their hands. Some children may choose to bang on the boxes on the sides while others may use the bottoms. Whatever the children decide is great! Describe not only the children's actions but the results as well.
- **Advanced Preschoolers:** These children may think of other ways to use the boxes to make music. Encourage their ideas! This may mean they need to seek out other materials, which is fine. In addition, these children can make predictions about which techniques (or materials) they think will enable them to make the "best" music.

Your Own Activities

Lesson Plan Sample

The first page of each daily lesson includes the following:

DAY 2

Unit: Boxes, Blankets and Balls
 Today's Focus: Fun with Packing Boxes
 Developmental Areas Addressed Today:

Be Healthy & Safe!

Fresh air and sunshine are very important to the health and well-being of children and adults. Make sure to have outdoor play time every day...weather permitting.

Teaching Tip of the Day

Make saying, or singing, nursery rhymes a part of your daily routine. It is an excellent way to build language/literacy skills.

Transition Time

Have the children pretend to deliver packages as they move from activity to activity today.

Get Moving!

Exploring Together: Deliver the Package!
 (all ages,)

Materials:

- Max the Mail Carrier puppet
- Packing/Mailing box with your address printed on the outside** (You can get Priority Mail boxes for free at the post office. See link on page 2).
- Recorded music

- Let's face it...children love to move! This experience incorporates music and movement in a fun way. As the children participate, they will also engage in dramatic play as they pretend to be mail carriers delivering packages. This would be a great experience to take outdoors if the weather is nice in your area.
- Sit on the floor with the Max the Mail Carrier puppet and one of the packing/ mailing boxes. As the children gather, invite them to explore the box. What does the box look like? Are there any words written on the outside of the box? Challenge more advanced children to point out the words they see and then read them to them. Do they recognize any letters within those words?
- Encourage the children to talk about a time when they may have received a box like this in the mail. What was inside? Who sent the box? How do they think the box got from where it was sent to their own house? Use these discussions to help the children learn more about how boxes get from here to there. Sometimes they fly on airplanes, sometimes they go by truck and many times are delivered on foot. This would be a great time to involve Max in the discussions!
- Next, introduce the game, "Deliver the Package." Use a lawn chair, bucket or any other object to designate the turning around point (about 15 feet from the children). Then, turn on recorded music and give one child a box. Have this child pretend to be a mail carrier as he/she runs to the turning around point and then back to the group to "deliver" the package to the next person. Continue playing until each child has a turn to "deliver the package."

Today's Vocabulary

Use some of these words in conversations with children today!

package deliver weight

address post office

As younger children participate in activities today, model language by...

- Using words, such as those listed above, while engaging children in conversations during the day's activities.
- Talking with children as they role-play a post office (p. 7).
- Describing children's actions as they use boxes to make music (p. 7).

Questions to Spur Thinking

- What do you see on the box? What do you think those words say?
- How does the mail carrier know where to deliver a package?
- How long do you think it would take to mail a package to (place)?
- Who would you like to mail a package to? What would you send him/her?

Picture codes to show the developmental areas addressed.

Activities with this symbol build gross motor skills because they get children moving.

The first bullet of each activity explains the "why" behind it.

This group experience invites children to learn how they do best...through exploration! This activity is inclusive of all ages.

Tips to help you model language and build vocabulary each day.

Questions to get children thinking and help you engage them in meaningful conversations.

Lesson Plan Sample

The second page of each daily lesson includes the following:

Activities in pink are designed for toddlers, twos and preschoolers.

Some activities are "leveled" to help you meet the needs of children with different skill levels.

Activities in purple are designed just for infants!

More questions to promote interactions with children.

Activities with this symbol may be done outdoors if desired.

Space to add your own ideas!

Day 2 - Center/Small Group Activities

Packing and Shipping
(Toddlers—4 years, 🗨️ 🧠 🍷 📦 🧑🏻 🧒 🧑🏼)

Materials:

- Assorted boxes** (see note on p. 2 about getting free boxes from the USPS)
- Wide tape, crayons/markers, tissue paper, scissors

- Children use dramatic play to not only show what they know but also to build skills in many other areas. During this experience, the children can pretend to pack and ship surprises to family or friends. This is also an excellent way for them to build fine motor control. Because different developmental levels will approach this experience differently, we are providing options.
- **Toddlers/Twos/Young Threes:** This age group will just enjoy putting things in boxes and taking them out. As they play, be sure to not only describe the objects they choose as well as their actions. This would be an excellent time to reinforce the opposites in and out as well.
- **Older Threes/Fours/Advanced Preschoolers:** These children can choose items to pack and then tape up the boxes in preparation for "shipping" them. As they do so, your most advanced group can even write their addresses on the boxes or can dictate them for you to write. Be sure to talk about letter names and beginning sounds during this time. Once packed, the children can even pretend to deliver their packages. Then, they can unpack them and repack them again and again. If possible, keep this learning station open for this entire unit.

Questions to Spur Thinking

- *Tell me about what you chose to pack and ship.*

- *What technique did you find worked best for using the box to make music?*

Banging on Boxes
(Toddlers—4 years, 🗨️ 🧠 🍷 🎵 ? 🧑🏻 🧒 🧑🏼)

Materials:

- Assorted boxes
- Plastic or wooden cooking spoons

- Using every day items in different ways is a wonderful way for children to think outside the box and use problem-solving skills. During this experience, the children will do all of these things while building fine motor control and eye-hand coordination at the same time. In addition, the children will have the opportunity to make and test predictions as well.
- Set out the boxes as well as the plastic and wooden cooking spoons. As children show interest in these materials, engage them in conversations. Challenge them to use the boxes to make music. Some children may choose to bang on the boxes with the spoons while others may choose to use their hands. Some children may choose to hit the boxes on the sides while others may use the bottoms. Whatever the children decide is great! Describe not only the children's actions but the results as well.
- **Advanced Preschoolers:** These children may think of other ways to use the boxes to make music. Encourage their ideas! This may mean they need to seek out other materials...which is fine. In addition, these children can make predictions about which techniques (or materials) they think will enable them to make the "best" music.

Your Own Activities

Pop!
(Infants, 🗨️ 🧠 🍷 📦 🧑🏻 🧒 🧑🏼)

Materials:

- Box and plush animal

- Reciting rhymes is a wonderful way of exposing infants to new language and vocabulary. Adding action makes the rhyme more engaging and also challenges the infant to use his/her senses.
- Have the infant sit beside you (if he/she is able to do so) or hold him/her in your lap. Put the box in front of you. Recite the rhyme and then make the animal pop out of the box at the corresponding time.

What is in the box?
 What is in the box?
 I will count and you will see...
 What is in the box!
 1...2...3....
 POP!

Curriculum Components

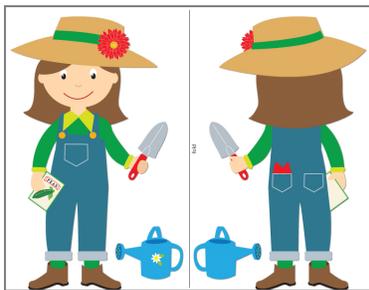
Story Props

Each month, you will receive an original story and story props. The story itself and detailed instructions on how to prepare the props can be found in the Teaching Guide for the first unit. The types of props will vary from month to month. This makes storytelling fun and interesting. The story props are provided as a separate file available to Paid Subscribers on our website.



Printable Puppet

The second unit each month will now contain a printable puppet. The types of puppets will vary from month to month. The one pictured here is designed to be glued to a pocket puppet. You will use the puppet to introduce new concepts and ideas throughout the unit.



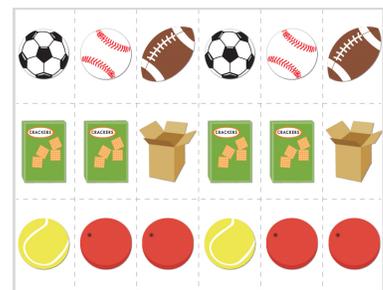
* Please note...the examples pictured on the following two pages are from past units. The ones for this coming year are currently in production.

Teaching Tool

You will find a Teaching Tool included with the second unit each month. This component is designed so you can use it in many ways to reinforce skills in many different developmental levels.

Preparation directions are normally found in the Teaching Guide.

While the guide also gives ideas on when to use the Teaching Tool, feel free to utilize it in other ways as well. Our goal is to provide you with a tool that is both educational and flexible!



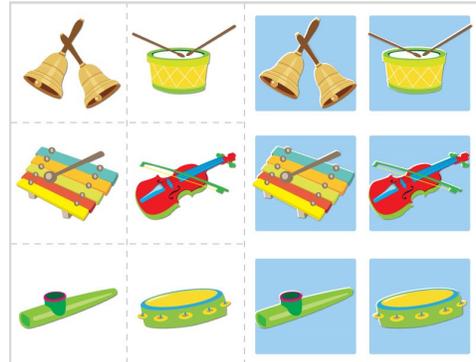
Curriculum Components

Make It! Sheets

You will find the Make It! Sheets in the Paid Subscribers section of our website. These are totally OPTIONAL! Unlike "coloring sheets," Make It! Sheets are designed to be completed and used in different ways. The purpose behind these sheets is to:

- Promote fine motor development
- Encourage dramatic play (often)
- Be a "talking point" for parents, teachers and children

These sheets are meant to be reproduced. However, please print only enough copies to use in your program. Detailed directions as well as options for using the sheets can be found in the Teaching Guide.



Family Letters

As you know well, parents/caregivers want to stay informed about what their children learn while they are in your care. You will receive two Family Letters each month...one for each unit. These files can be found in the Paid Subscribers section of our website. Like the Make It! Sheets, these are reproducible. This PDF file can be printed or emailed.

Just for Families!

We are going to be "ocean explorers" as we dig into our next unit, "Underwater Wonders." We will touch on just a few of the amazing creatures that live in the ocean. If you live near an aquarium, try to plan a time to visit with your family. It would be an amazing hands-on experience for your child! Here are a few of the topics we will explore during this unit:

- * What is an Ocean?
- * Fish and Sharks
- * Octopus and Dolphins
- * Learning about the Ocean
- * Jellyfish and Crabs
- * Sand and Seashells

The following activities will help you reinforce the theme, "Underwater Wonders" at home.

During bath time: Add a plastic fish, or other sea creatures, to the bathtub. Encourage your child, if verbal, to share what he/she knows about each one.

During meals: Serve gelatin and talk about how it looks and feels like a jellyfish.

At bedtime: Have your child "swim" to his/her bed a bedtime like his/her favorite sea creature.

When riding in the car: Give your child books to look at about the ocean and ocean animals.

Spray your child with a hose while he/she pretends to be a fish. Sing the following song while doing so.

LITTLE FISH DOWN IN THE SEA
(tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

Little fish down in the sea,
I see you...do you see me?
Swimming quietly to and fro,
I just love to see you go!
Little fish down in the sea,
I see you...do you see me?

Individualization Web

Another component of the curriculum is our Individualization Web. Each unit has a web that has been customized with the unit's name and topics. Feel free to print out a web for each child. More details on how to use the Individualization Web along with the Observe & Reflect Grid can be found on pages 15-20 of this guide. These tools, when used together, not only help you gain important developmental information about each child, they also help you individualize the curriculum.

Individualization Web

Child's Name:	Monthly Unit Title & Topics: Let's Go Camping!	
Child's Interest or Area of Focus:	What is Camping? Camping Activities Squawnee Succinea Deer	Places to Camp Forest Plants & Trees Oaks Bears
Child Response to the Question: - What would you like to learn about _____?		
Activities Planned:		
Reflection:		

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Curriculum Components

Digital Family Notes

This component is truly unique! These Digital Family Notes are provided to you as .jpeg images. This means that you will be able to save the files to attach to emails, send as text messages, or even place in a newsletter if working with a group.

The Digital Family Note files can be found in the Paid Subscribers section of our website. To use them, simply click on each file and save it to your computer in your picture folder. Then, you may choose to use these files in the following ways:

- Attach the file to an email to parents
- If you have a Smartphone, save as an image/picture and then text to parents/caregivers.
- If you produce your own newsletter, insert the image as a picture and insert in your newsletter.



All About My Week Reports - An "Step Back & Reflect" Tool

At GWE, we believe that assessment/evaluation should be an on-going, authentic process. Our All About My Week reports are a wonderful tool that helps you gather critical information about each child's interests and skill level.

The All About My Week Report files can be found in the Paid Subscribers section of the GWE website. A new design is included with each theme. You will need two copies of each design for each child because you will be sending one home per week. Again, please only print as many copies as you need for the children in your care.

Be sure to make a copy of each child's completed report to keep for yourself. The information included on these reports will help you assess each child's skill level in many developmental areas as well as assist you as you strive to individualize the program. The completed reports can be a wonderful addition to any child's portfolio.

All About My Week

Name: _____ Date: _____

This week, the activity I enjoyed most was: _____

This week, I spent a lot of time playing with:

<input type="checkbox"/> art materials	<input type="checkbox"/> books	<input type="checkbox"/> toy vehicles
<input type="checkbox"/> sand	<input type="checkbox"/> water	<input type="checkbox"/> puzzles
<input type="checkbox"/> blocks	<input type="checkbox"/> riding toys	<input type="checkbox"/> toy/plush animals
<input type="checkbox"/> play Food	<input type="checkbox"/> dolls	<input type="checkbox"/> dress-up clothes
<input type="checkbox"/> playsets	<input type="checkbox"/> balls	<input type="checkbox"/> playdough
<input type="checkbox"/> other _____		

I am trying very hard to learn how to: _____

I am getting very good at: _____

BONUS Materials for Paid Subscribers

EXCLUSIVE FREEBIES

Once you become a *Gee Whiz* Paid Subscribers, you will have access to a special section on our website that contains freebies just for you. We would love to tell you what they are but then the secret would be out! Just log in to see what **BONUS** materials are available to you.



QUARTERLY WEBINARS

Paid *Gee Whiz* subscribers get exclusive access to quarterly webinars on topics such as questioning techniques, character education, building literacy skills and, of course, using the curriculum! In addition, we record these webinars so you can go back and listen to them again or access them if you were unable to attend the live session.



Supplemental Materials Available on the Gee Whiz Website

Developmental Checklists

Looking for developmental checklists? Visit the Developmental Checklist section of our website! The CDC has a wonderful set of checklists you can use with your children. Here is the link to that information: <http://www.geewhizeducation.com/developmental-checklist/>

In addition, because of the comprehensive nature of the curriculum, many different formal assessment tools may be used with it. The skills and concepts covered in the curriculum address state and national standards and therefore, provide a strong foundation for learning in all areas of development.



These are just a few of the MANY supplemental materials available to providers on our website. Just visit the tab titled, "FCC Tools" to see what we have to offer. New materials are added to this section quite frequently.

Adapting the Curriculum

Let's face it. No two programs are the same. Some of you have mainly toddlers while others may have children with developmental delays or even physical challenges. The following are just a few ideas on how you may want to adapt the program to meet some common challenges. Of course, we always encourage you to adapt and modify the curriculum to meet the individual needs of the children in your program as well.

Mainly Infants & Toddlers

If your program has mainly infants and toddlers, your hands are definitely full! Infants and toddlers, because of their developmental level, enjoy (and need) repetition. If you have a lot of infants and toddlers in your group, you can:

- ⇒ Repeat activities, including Circle Time, for more than one day
- ⇒ Break activities into smaller "chunks" - Infants and toddlers have a very short attention span
- ⇒ Focus on activities that you think your infants and toddlers will enjoy and save others for when they get a little older.

Short Attention Span

Let's face it...ALL children have short attention spans! In general, the average attention span for a young child is 3-5 minutes for each year. In other words, an average two-year old has an attention span of about 6-10 minutes...that's it!

The key with keeping children engaged is to plan activities based on their interests and needs. That means adapting and modifying activities in the curriculum to "tailor" them to your children. That may mean adding more materials or substituting different ones.

The Gee Whiz curriculum is filled with experiences that invite children to move, explore, create and experiment. We strongly believe that this is the best way to keep children excited about learning!

Developmental Delays.

Children with developmental delays require a slightly different approach. The main thing to keep in mind is that even though their chronological age might be 3 or 4, their developmental level may be more like that of a 2 year old. When working with these children, you can:

- ⇒ Repeat activities...much like you would for infants and toddlers. Repetition is very important for these children.
- ⇒ Adjust activities to play up to each child's strengths and build upon their challenges. In order to achieve this goal, you will need to be very aware of each child's developmental level in all areas. Parents/caregivers will need to provide you with this information, especially if a formal assessment has already been done.
- ⇒ If you are working with children with disabilities, please check out the CDC fact sheets on our website at <http://www.geewhizeducation.com/disabilities-checklists/> These checklists are filled with valuable information about many common disabilities



Materials to Collect

At Gee Whiz Education, we recognize that you work on a very tight budget! To help you in this area, we plan activities and experiences that utilize everyday household items, inexpensive supplies and recyclables. Collecting these things to have on hand will assure you have what you need when you are ready to complete activities with the children. Parents relatives or even friends are often more than happy to supply you with these items if they have them on hand. Don't be afraid to ask!

Recyclables

- Cardboard boxes (all sizes)
- Paper towel and toilet tissue rolls
- Paper shopping bags (grocery and department store)
- Spools
- Egg cartons (only Styrofoam, washed or wiped down with a cleaning wipe)*
- Empty milk or juice cartons and jugs*
- Empty juice boxes*
- Dress up clothing* - yard sales and thrift stores are great resources for these!
- Plastic food containers and lids*
- Old newspapers
- Old blankets or sheets*
- Empty food boxes
- Old socks and nylon stockings/knee highs*
- Jar lids (assorted sizes)*
- Oatmeal containers with lids

Consumables

- Drawing and construction paper
- Paint (easel and watercolors)
- Finger-paint (see recipe, next page)
- Playdough (see recipe, next page)
- Paper lunch bags
- Sponges
- Paper plates (large and small)
- Paper towels
- Plastic cups (different sizes)
- Drinking straws
- Aluminum foil
- Zipper-top bags (large and small)

Keep Handy

- Blankets and sheets
- Extra pillows
- Folding tables
- CD player or digital music player and docking station
- Flashlights (child-safe)



** Make sure to wash and dry completely before using with children.*

Recipes for Basic Materials

Bubble solution and playdough can be expensive to buy and yet, are quick and easy to prepare yourself...for a whole lot less money! Use these recipes to help you prepare these materials so you do not need to buy them!

Cooked Playdough

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups water (add food coloring, if you want)
- 2 Tbsp. cooking oil
- 4 tsp. cream of tartar

Mix dry ingredients together in an old cooking pot. Add water and oil. Cook on medium heat until the mixture forms a ball. It is important to make sure you do NOT overcook the dough. Carefully remove the dough from the pot and knead once cool enough to touch. Store in a zipper-top bag to keep soft and fresh.

Bubble Solution

- 1 cup liquid dish detergent
- 2 cups water
- 4 Tbsp. glycerin (purchase at the drugstore)
- 1 tsp. sugar

Mix ingredients together and store in an airtight container.



Baking Clay

- 1 1/2 cups salt
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 4 cups flour

Mix dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Add water slowly and mix well. Once mixed, remove dough from bowl and knead on floured surface until smooth. Shape dough as desired and bake at 300 degrees until hardened. Hint: thinner creations harden faster and very thick ones may not harden completely. Keep an eye on creations while baking.

Washable Finger Paint

- 1/3 cup cornstarch
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 cups cold water
- 1/4 cup liquid dish detergent
- Tempera paint
- Airtight containers with lids (one per color)

Mix cornstarch and sugar in a cooking pot. Slowly add cold water, stirring constantly. Cook over medium heat until almost clear. Remove from heat and pour into a mixing bowl. Allow to cool. Once cool, add 1/4 c. liquid dish detergent. Divide into airtight containers with lids and tint with tempera paint to make as many different colors as desired.

Tips and Tricks



Don't you just love those, "Wow! I wish I would have thought of that!" ideas? Here are a few tips and tricks we hope will help you!

Refrigerator Story Board

Who says you need a fancy flannelboard to share a story? Instead of using a flannelboard, use your refrigerator! Just attach strips of magnetic tape to the back of story pieces and put them on and off the refrigerator as you tell the story. (Unfortunately, if you have a stainless steel refrigerator this will not work). If this is the case, you can try other metal surfaces OR use loops of painter's tape and attach the pieces to a window or wall instead.

Art Paper Storage

Pizza boxes make great storage containers for art paper AND they stack! Just ask your local pizza restaurant if they would be willing to donate a few new boxes. Cut a small piece of each color of paper you put in each box and glue to the outside edge. That way you will know at a glance the colors of paper inside each box.

Diapering Time

Getting toddlers to lie still long enough to get their diapers changed can be a chore at times! Next time your little bundles of energy do not want to lie still to get their diapers changed, try singing this silly song.

Diddly, Diddly, Doo
(tune: "Yankee Doodle")

Diddly, diddly, diddly, doo
I'll change your diaper now.
Wiggly, wiggly, wiggly, woo
And then you can get down.
Watch me make a silly face.
You can make it, too.
Here it comes, get ready now.
I'll make it just for you!

(Make a silly face and invite child to make it with you!)

Crayon/Marker Sorters

There is nothing more frustrating than a big box of mixed, broken crayons. Here is an easy way to keep your crayons and markers sorted by color while promoting classification skills at the same time! Just save empty cardboard juice cartons. Wash and dry the cartons. Cut the tops from the containers, leaving about 4 inches of the sides attached to the bottom. Wrap each cut carton in a different color of construction paper (one for each color of crayon or marker). When finished, have the children help you sort the crayons and markers into the individual containers by color.

Homemade Paint Stampers

This art tool is excellent for very young children or those with limited fine motor control. To make this art tool, you will need empty spools and sponges. Trace cookie cutters onto sponges and cut out. Use a hot glue gun to attach a spool to each sponge. Allow the glue to harden. Children can use the spools as handles as they press the sponge portion into paint and then onto paper.