

# Gee Whiz Education Curriculum 2017-2018 User's Guide



[www.geewhizeducation.com](http://www.geewhizeducation.com)

# Welcome!

Welcome to GEE WHIZ Education (GWE)! We are excited that you have chosen to use our curriculum in your family child care, homeschool program or other educational environment. If you are not a customer, we hope you will join us soon!

It is our goal to provide educators, like you, with an abundance of learning experiences each month that you can use as the foundation for your program. While we believe you will find our Teaching Guides packed full of activities, we look at the program as just a starting point. It is you, the educator, that will add the "magic" that makes learning meaningful for children!

Please take a few minutes to read through this guide before you begin teaching the activities included in the Teaching Guide. There is a ton of information in this User's Guide that will help you as you begin. For those of you not GEE WHIZ Education customers, this guide is filled with information about children, learning and so much more.

## Table of Contents

Why Gee Whiz?.....	3
Testimonials.....	4
<b>SECTION 1: YOUR ROLE</b>	
Effective Teaching Involves.....	6
Teachable Moments.....	7
On-Going Training & Self-Assessment.....	8
<b>SECTION 2: INDIVIDUALIZATION &amp; AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT</b>	
Individualizing the Gee Whiz Education Curriculum.....	10-12
Anecdotal Notes & Reflections.....	13-14
Planning Based on Anecdotal Notes & Reflections.....	15
Authentic Assessment & Putting It All Together.....	16
Observe & Reflect Grid & Sample.....	17-18
Individualization Web & Sample.....	19-20
<b>SECTION 3: DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS &amp; LEARNING INDICATORS</b>	
The Whole Child.....	22
Developmental Areas Addressed by the Program.....	23-32
Gee Whiz Learning Indicators.....	33-34
What Are Those Symbols? Learning Connections!.....	35
<b>SECTION 4: PHILOSOPHY, RESEARCH &amp; MORE</b>	
Program Philosophy.....	37-38
Research Basis.....	39-40
Developmentally Appropriate Practice.....	41
<b>SECTION 5: IMPLEMENTING THE GEE WHIZ CURRICULUM</b>	
Getting Started.....	43
Curriculum Components (including lesson plan sample).....	44-49
BONUS Materials for Paid Subscribers.....	50
Supplemental Materials Available on the Gee Whiz Website.....	51
Adapting the Curriculum.....	52
Materials to Collect.....	53
Recipes for Basic Materials.....	54
Tips & Tricks.....	55
2017-2018 Yearly Outline.....	56-57



# Why Gee Whiz?

At Gee Whiz, we recognize that providers have their own unique needs when it comes to curriculum. Before launching our product, we did extensive research to determine what providers were looking for in a curriculum. Our product is based on the answers given by providers and...we are constantly seeking feedback from our customers on how we can continue to enhance the product.

Here are the top 5 reasons why we think you will LOVE Gee Whiz:

**#5 Convenient!** Everything you need is at your fingertips 24/7 because the curriculum "lives" online.

**#4 Economical!** Print only what you need. No waste. No leftovers.

**#3 Aligned!** Gee Whiz is already approved in several states (with more to come) and aligned with state and national early childhood standards.

**#2 Interactive!** Open-ended, child-directed activities dominate the Gee Whiz approach.

**#1 Inclusive!** ALL ages (infants, toddlers, preschoolers & school-age) have activities planned just for them in the curriculum. With Gee Whiz, you do NOT need to purchase different curriculums for different ages. This not only saves you money, but makes for a stronger learning environment for all of the children in your care because they will be learning together!



# Testimonials

"Many family child care providers have dreamt of finding a curriculum specific to your needs. Well, providers look no more, the *Gee Whiz* creative development team has built an easy affordable online curriculum just for you, your parent clientele, and your multiage group enrollment. The curriculum is researched based to meet most of our states Early Learning Developmental Standards.

What I love the best about the product, is that they were mindful of the way providers and parents communicate these days, so...you'll be able to text, e-mail, post on your website and/or send home traditional paper newsletters to keep parents informed and involved in the education and socialization of their children!

In my humble opinion, *Gee Whiz* has produced a wonderful Family Child Care Curriculum for you and your fellow family child care professionals."

Daphne C. - Tennessee



It's like a dream come true for family child care providers!

Finally, an affordable, quality curriculum that supports the ever-changing developmental needs of children and daily responsibilities of family child care providers! I've found the *Gee Whiz* curriculum to be a comprehensive program that is research-based, innovative, and fun for both the children and provider! The clear and concise format and every day materials make it easy to pick up and implement even during the busiest of days. It's a "must have" for all family child care providers!

-Dana L. - Wisconsin

# Section 1: Your Role



## The Importance of...

- Questioning
- Modeling Language
- Teachable Moments
- On-Going Training & Self-Assessment

# Effective Teaching Involves...

## Asking Questions

Asking the right questions challenges children to think and uses their own creativity to solve problems. While very young children may only be able to answer comprehension questions (e.g., "What was the boy's name in the story?"), older children should be asked questions that invite them to think. For instance, "How are you going to use those materials to make a boat that will float?"



## Modeling Language

Children build vocabulary and language skills by listening to you! Think of them as little sponges...absorbing everything they hear long before they can speak the words themselves.

Be sure to model language during the ENTIRE day...not just during "teaching time." Talk with children about what they are doing as they engage in free play or during routine times such as snack. For instance, you might say something like this when the children are playing outside: "You are using that small bucket as a shovel to fill the large bowl." Doing this helps the child link your spoken language with his/her actions.



## Teaching "Intentionally!"

Know your children and teach with them in mind. Each child is different and has his/her own background of knowledge. Keep this in mind when planning activities and experiences each day. Many times, this may mean that "one size does not fit all" and you may need to modify or adjust activities to meet the individual needs and interests. Pages 9-20 of this guide provides concrete examples of how you can individualize the Gee Whiz Education curriculum. This section also helps you learn how to record anecdotal notes and reflections to help you build a curriculum that is responsive to the each child's needs.

# Teachable Moments

## What Is a Teachable Moment?

**ANY** moment can be a teachable moment...

- *Jules just found a butterfly in the backyard*
- *Andrew fell and bumped his knee*
- *Juanita went to the dentist for the first time*
- *Max and his friend are having trouble sharing the tricycle*
- *Isabella desperately wants to carry a bucket full of water but it is too heavy for her to carry by herself*

As an educator, your job is to keep your eyes and ears open for these types of moments. Take the opportunity to use them as a time for children to learn, develop and grow. Teachable moments are not limited to cognitive areas but instead encompass all other areas of development...social, emotional, and physical. Asking open-ended questions and engaging children in conversation is a sure-fire way to turn an everyday moment into a teachable one. Taking advantage of these teachable moments can help children become confident and successful.



The photo above shows a "teachable moment!" While interacting with the child, you could ask questions such as, "What do you already know about butterflies?" and "Where do you think that butterfly lives?" Expand upon the discovery by helping the child locate books about butterflies or invite him/her to create a picture or model of his/her discovery using art supplies. The possibilities are truly endless!

# On-Going Training & Self-Assessment

On-going training and self-assessment are a big part of the *Gee Whiz* curriculum. At *Gee Whiz*, we recognize that it is extremely important for you, the provider, to have access to information about child development, best practices and more. To help you be, "the best provider you can be," you will find the following training and self-assessment tools included in the curriculum. Plus, this User's Guide is also a very important training resource.

## The "Why" Behind Experiences:

Each activity in the *Gee Whiz* curriculum explains the "why" behind it in the first bullet point. In addition, picture codes are used to identify the developmental areas (p. 21-34) addressed by the experience. Here is an example:

*First bullet point explains the "why"*

### Exploring Together: Scurry Like a Squirrel

(all ages, 😊 🖐️ ❤️ 🔑 🖋️ 🎵 📖 🗣️)

- Squirrels are a forest animal that also lives in parks, neighborhoods and backyards. If squirrels frequent your backyard, plan to watch them from the window with the children as part of the experiences planned for today. During this activity, the children will have the opportunity to pretend to be squirrels as they engage in dramatic play. In the process, they will build gross motor skills and practice self-regulation.

*Developmental areas addressed*



Introduction to *Gee Whiz* Training Webinar: Available 24/7 on our website, this webinar will help you better understand how to implement the curriculum in your program. A certificate of attendance is available after viewing. You can find the video in our Video Gallery on our homepage, [www.geewhizeducation.com](http://www.geewhizeducation.com).

Provider Monthly Review Sheet: Taking time to reflect on how things are going is very important. This simple, easy-to-complete document is designed to help you do just that. Some ECE Specialists with QRIS programs may require completion of this document if you are participating in their quality programs. Even if you are not, it is VERY important to take a step back and evaluate how things are going.

In addition, *Gee Whiz* Education offers our current paid subscribers access to complimentary training webinars on a wide variety of ECE topics throughout the year. See p. 50 of this guide for details.

# Section 2: Individualization & Authentic Assessment



## Reflection (8/15/16):

*Thomas enjoyed playing with the large exercise ball. He especially enjoyed pushing it back and forth with me. He would probably enjoy exploring pushing different sized balls back and forth as well.*



## Anecdotal Note (8/15/16):

*Samantha grasped the handles of the rolling pin with both hands and pressed it onto the playdough. She pushed it back and forth. Her eyes focused on the rolling pin while doing so.*

# Individualizing the Gee Whiz Curriculum

At Gee Whiz Education, we understand that curriculum needs to be responsive and ever-changing. Research has shown that children are more engaged in learning if the activities presented to them center around their interests.

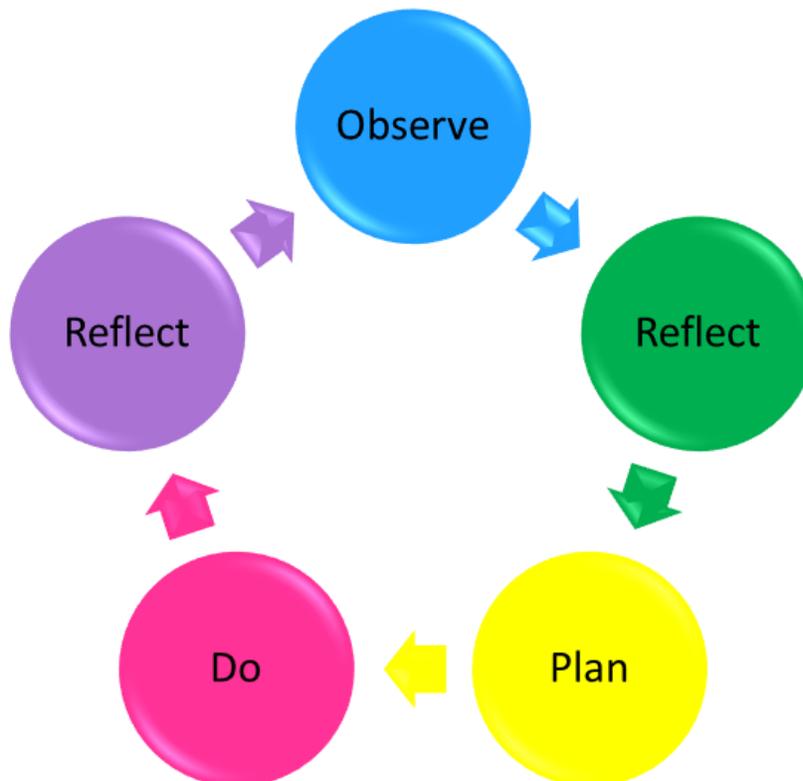
At the same time, we also understand that many educators need a helping hand with planning a curriculum. With days filled from morning to night and paperwork galore, the time required to put together a comprehensive approach that integrates many developmental areas in each activity can be a challenge ... to say the least!

Who says that the best approach needs to be one way or the other? Why not blend the two... activities centered around the children's interests WITH a planned curriculum?

The following pages detail exactly how to achieve this goal!



## A 5-Step Approach



# Individualizing in 5 Easy Steps

## Step #1 - Observing & Recording

As you are well aware, children's interests and development change all the time. Keeping up with these changes challenging!

To make the most of your observations, it is important to jot down notes. These are called anecdotal notes. These notes do not need to be lengthy or detailed. Instead, they are just meant to trigger your memory when it comes time to plan activities and/or evaluate development. The important thing to remember is to record these notes without your opinion or interpretation. For details on how to do this, please see page 13.

And finally...be sure to ask parents/caregivers to share their feedback as well. This input is critical when planning experiences.



## Step #2 - Reflect on Your Observations



Now that you have a strong understanding of each child's interests and level of development, it is time to think to reflect on the information you gathered. Where is the child developmentally in the area/areas observed? How are you going to incorporate his/her level of development and interests into your curriculum? At Gee Whiz, we recognize the power of reflection and have tools to help you build this into your program. Please see page 14 for details on how we accomplish this goal.

## Step #3 - Plan Experiences

So...now what do you do with the knowledge you now have about each child's interests and developmental levels? How do you use it to plan activities related to those interests that also integrate Gee Whiz Education? Our Individualization Web is just one tool you can use to help you adapt and modify the curriculum to incorporate the children's interests and address their individual needs. Please see pages 15-20 for detailed information on how to use this helpful tool.



# Individualizing in 5 Easy Steps

## Step #4: Do!

Now the hard part is behind you and the fun part begins! As you work your way through the daily activities in the *Gee Whiz* curriculum, integrate those you planned specifically for each child when they seem to fit the best. This will take a little bit of time on your part but will be well worth it. Make sure to record anecdotal notes and observations as the children complete these experiences. You will need this information.



## Step #5 - Reflect Again!

That's right! Now you have to take a step back and reflect, yet again, on what you observed. Was the child engaged in the experiences you planned? If not, why? Did the experiences address the developmental area you hoped they would? Why or why not? Again, use our helpful Observe & Reflect Grid (see pages 17-18) to help you. This reflection is very, very important and will help you better address the individual needs of the children in your group.

After completing Step #5, guess what?  
The entire process starts all over again!



# Anecdotal Notes & Reflections

## Anecdotal Notes

### What is an anecdotal note?

An anecdotal note is a factual, written record of a child. It includes who, what, how and sometimes where and when. It is written so that the reader can picture exactly what happened without interpretation. It does NOT include what you think a child is feeling or what you think a child was thinking. Instead it is simply based on EXACTLY what you observe. At Gee Whiz, we view anecdotal notes as an authentic assessment tool.

### Why are anecdotal notes important?

Anecdotal notes are very important because they are based on fact. They help teachers plan experiences for children based on what they know about their levels of development in all areas. They are also very helpful when talking with parents/caregivers because they are based on facts...not opinions.

### What does a good anecdotal note look like?

A strong anecdotal note includes the following:

1. A brief description of the setting
2. A summary what happened
3. Direct quotes...if possible
4. ONLY the facts!

The best way for you to learn how to write good anecdotal notes is to give you an example. Here is one:

Date: August 15, 2016

*Thomas and Jose are playing side-by-side in the block area. Thomas has a stack of 5 plastic blocks in front of him. He picks up another block and puts it on the top of the stack. The stack wobbles slightly. Thomas watches the stack and when it stops wobbling, he smiles and says to Jose, "Look how tall my stack of blocks is now!" Jose nods his head and picks up a block and puts it on top of another one. The block falls off. Jose bends his head downward toward the ground.*



Now that you have your anecdotal note, you are ready for the next step...  
**REFLECTION!**

# Anecdotal Notes & Reflections

## Reflections

### What are reflections?

A reflection is based on your observations and anecdotal notes. It is your chance to sit back and think about what you saw and heard. What does this information tell you about the child (e.g., developmental level, interests, etc.)? This is where you get to put on your thinking cap!

### Why are reflections important?

Reflecting on observations is a critical part of planning experiences for young children as well as adapting and modifying curriculum. Your reflections will help you plan future activities, address individual needs and much more.

### What does a good reflection look like?

A strong reflection is quite simple...your interpretation of an event along with what you learned from it. Let's look at the anecdotal note from the previous page. Here is an example of what a reflection might look like:



#### Reflection based on anecdotal note for Thomas dated 8/15/16:

*Thomas appears to have strong fine motor control because he was able to stack six blocks without difficulty. He also appeared to be quite proud of his accomplishment as he spoke to Jose. His expressive language skills reflect his ability to form complete sentences without hesitation.*

#### Reflection based on anecdotal note for Jose dated 8/15/16:

*Jose struggled to stack two blocks without them falling. His fine motor skills are still developing in this area. In addition, he appeared to be frustrated/upset when his blocks fell down.*

Now that you have your reflections, you are ready for the next step... **PLANNING!**

# Planning Based on Anecdotal Notes & Reflections

Now that you've done your anecdotal notes and your reflections, it is time to take what you've learned and use it when individualizing curriculum and planning additional experiences. At Gee Whiz, we have two tools to help you achieve this goal: our Individualization Web and our Observe & Reflect Grid.

Observe & Reflect Grid		
My Name:	Child's Name:	Setting:
Date:	Child's Current Age (years & months):	
Time:		
Anecdotal Note/Observation:		
Reflection:		
Developmental Areas to Address in Planning:		

The Observe & Reflect Grid is a tool you can use to help you keep on-going anecdotal notes and reflections for each child in your group. To make organization easier, we recommend putting these in a 3-ring binder for each child. That way, you will have everything you need in one place. You will find a blank copy of this tool on the following pages. Feel free to make as many copies as you need. To help you get started using this tool, you will find a completed Observe & Reflect Grid on page 18.

The Individualization Web is a tool you can use to help you adapt and modify the Gee Whiz curriculum to meet the individual needs of the children in your group. The Observe & Reflect Grid works hand-in-hand with the Individualization Web. A blank web can be found on page 19 with a sample completed web on page 20.

Individualization Web	
Child's Name:	Monthly Unit Title & Topics:
Child's Interest or Area of Focus:	
Child Response to the Question - What would you like to learn about _____?	
Activities Planned:	
Reflection:	



# Authentic Assessment - Putting It All Together

They say that, "Practice makes perfect." This is especially true when it comes to recording anecdotal notes, reflecting and then planning activities to individualize. The more you do it, the easier it becomes! The next few pages have both blank and sample grids/webs to help you get started. As mentioned previously, keeping a 3-ring binder for each child is a great way to stay organized! Feel free to print as many of the blank grids/webs as needed, keeping in mind that a new Individualization Web is included with each unit.

At Gee Whiz, we view anecdotal notes, reflections and the use of the Individualization Web as ways of gathering key information about each child in an authentic way. Because you are observing and recording notes as children play, what you see and hear is an accurate representation of their developmental level and abilities. By keeping notes on these observations and building from them, you are not only assessing children as they play and grow but also planning experiences to build upon their strengths and address areas for development.

Formal assessment do have a place and can be used in conjunction with the Gee Whiz approach. That said, we truly believe that recording anecdotal notes and reflecting upon them is THE best way for you to get a true picture of each child's level of development in all areas on a regular basis.



# Observe & Reflect Grid

My Name:  Date: Time:	Child's Name:  Child's Current Age (years & months):	Setting:
Anecdotal Note/Observation:		
Reflection:		
Developmental Areas to Address in Planning:		

# Sample Observe & Reflect Grid

<p>My Name: <i>Alicia Torres</i></p> <p>Date: <i>August 21, 2016</i></p> <p>Time: <i>9:35 AM</i></p>	<p>Child's Name: <i>Francisco</i></p> <p>Child's Current Age (years &amp; months): <i>3 years, 7 months</i></p>	<p>Setting: <i>Outdoor playspace</i></p>
<p>Anecdotal Note/Observation:</p> <p><i>Francisco walks over to the tricycle. He puts one leg over, sits on the seat and then lifts up his other leg. He puts both of his feet on the pedals. He pushes with his right foot but not with the other. He holds the handlebars with both hands. He looks down at his feet. He pushes with his right foot again but not his left foot. He grunts as he pushes. The tricycle moves forward about 3 inches. Francisco looks down at his feet again. He pushes the right foot on the pedal and the tricycle does not move. He hits the handlebar with his left hand, gets off the tricycle and runs to the sandbox.</i></p>		
<p>Reflection:</p> <p><i>Francisco appears to be interested in learning to ride a tricycle. It appears that he does not know how to use both feet to pedal. This seems to frustrate him as shown by his action of hitting the handlebars</i></p>		
<p>Planning - Developmental Areas to Address and Activities to Try:</p> <p><i>Gross Motor Skills - pedaling a tricycle -</i></p> <p><i>Activity: Have a tricycle available during outdoor playtime and when Francisco shows interest, help him learn how to push both feet to pedal.</i></p> <p><i>Social/Emotional Skills—appropriate ways of sharing emotions</i></p> <p><i>Activity: Read books with Francisco about emotions (including frustration) and use them to open the door to talking about feelings.</i></p>		

# Individualization Web

Child's Name:  Child's Interest or Area of Focus:	Monthly Unit Title & Topics:
Child Response to the Question - What would you like to learn about _____?	
Activities Planned:	
Reflection:	

# Sample Individualization Web

Child's Name: *Francisco*

Monthly Unit Title & Topics: I Am Special!

Child's Interest or Area of Focus:

*Vehicles (including tricycles)*

- \* My Name
- \* Things I Can Do
- \* My Uniqueness
- \* My Feelings & Kindness
- \* Things I Want to Learn How to Do
- \* My Family
- \* Easy/Difficult



Child Response to the Questions:

What would you like to learn about *vehicles*?:

*Francisco's response:*

*How things go and how fast they can go.*

*What makes them go?*

*How I can make things go fast!*

*About cars and trucks and buses and trains and tricycles.*

Activities Planned:

*Invite Francisco to bring in a photo of the vehicle he/she rides in each day to come to school.*

*Provide blocks for Francisco to use to build garages for vehicles.*

*Add a variety of vehicles to the blocks area as well.*

*Based on a previous observation, help Francisco learn to ride a tricycle (e.g., something he wants to learn to do + how things go).*

*Note how Francisco can make different types of vehicles go (e.g., things he can do)*

Reflection:

*Francisco really enjoyed building garages for vehicles with blocks. As he built, he talked about the people he knows who have a garage and the types of vehicles they drive. This was an excellent way for him to build his expressive language skills. He was also very excited about learning to ride a tricycle and was fascinated by the way the pedals made the wheel turn. We turned the tricycle upside-down so he could see how it worked. In addition, on his own, Francisco built several vehicles with interlocking blocks. This not only helped him to build his fine motor control, it also increased his self-esteem because it was something he could do on his own.*

# Section 3: Developmental Areas & Learning Indicators



How the Gee Whiz Curriculum  
Addresses All Developmental Areas

# The Whole Child



The experiences and activities included in the *Gee Whiz* curriculum address 10 developmental areas through an integrated approach. On the next few pages, you will find a description of each area along with how you may see this development exhibited in your children. Specific Learning Indicators addressed in each area can be found on pages 33-34.

# Language Development

## Language Development

Program Symbol = 

Language is something we all use every day and it encompasses many different things including:

- *Listening*
- *Speaking (verbal communication)*
- *Nonverbal Communication*

Toddlers are great at nonverbal communication (e.g., pointing to a cracker they want). As children grow, they learn to use verbal communication and, at the same time, develop stronger listening skills.

As a teacher, you can help to build language skills by modeling language and engaging children in conversations throughout the day.

The program will help you in both of these areas by providing guidance for questions to ask and tips to help you model language. In addition, stories, rhymes, and songs are an integral part of the program...all fun ways to promote language development with all children every day.



## What Does Language Development Look Like: (Birth - age 4)

### Listening:

- *A baby turns toward you when you talk and THEN...*
- *Listens to music and THEN...*
- *Listens to songs, rhymes and short stories and THEN...*
- *Can follow a one-step direction and THEN...*
- *Can listen to, and then follow, 2-3 step directions.*

### Speaking:

- *A baby cries in different ways when he/she needs different things and THEN...*
- *Says one word and THEN...*
- *Uses 2-4 word sentences and THEN...*
- *Can name many familiar things and THEN...*
- *Uses language to describe objects, people and events accurately.*

### Nonverbal:

- *A baby reaches up to let you know that he/she wants to be picked up and THEN...*
- *Points to something he/she wants and THEN...*
- *Uses simple gestures such as waving goodbye or blowing kisses to interact with others and THEN...*
- *Gives you a hug in the morning and THEN...*
- *Comforts a friend that is upset by giving him/her a hug.*

# Literacy Knowledge



## Literacy Knowledge

Program Symbol = 

Literacy knowledge is simply what children know about books, print, and writing. This area encompasses:

- *Phonological Awareness*
- *Appreciation for Books*
- *Alphabet Knowledge*
- *Concepts about Print*
- *Beginning Writing*

Even very young children can develop an appreciation for books. Reading to children from a very young age is a great way to promote development in this area.

As children get older, they will naturally develop a curiosity about how the spoken word can be written down in print. This leads to an awareness of concepts about print and alphabet knowledge.

The program includes experiences to help very young children develop a love for books and stories while inviting older children to dictate or write to express ideas.

## What Does Literacy Knowledge Look Like: (Birth - age 4)

### Phonological Awareness:

- *A baby turns his/her head toward you when you sing and THEN...*
- *Tries to imitate the sounds you make and THEN...*
- *Identifies common sounds in the environment and THEN...*
- *Enjoys reciting a rhyme and THEN...*
- *Can identify when two words rhyme.*

### Appreciation for Books:

- *An infant enjoys looking at a book for a very short period of time and THEN...*
- *Helps turn the pages in a book while you read and THEN...*
- *Sits and listens to longer stories and THEN...*
- *Handles books with care and THEN...*
- *Retells stories in his/her own words and may even create his/her own books.*

### Alphabet Knowledge:

- *An infant, toddler or two-year old listens while you sing the ABC song and THEN...*
- *Begins to recognize and name letters and THEN...*
- *Recognizes and names all of the letters of the alphabet (upper and lowercase).*

### Concepts about Print:

- *An infant, toddler or two-year old shows an interest in books and THEN...*
- *Recognizes logos and understand that they are symbols and THEN...*
- *Understands what a letter, word and sentence are.*

### Beginning Writing:

- *An infant tries to make marks using a crayon or marker and THEN...*
- *Scribbles and THEN...*
- *Holds a crayon or marker the correct way and THEN...*
- *Understands that writing is a way for people to share information and THEN...*
- *Incorporates writing into dramatic play and other activities.*

# Math Knowledge

## Math Knowledge

Program Symbol = ①

Math knowledge encompasses:

- *Number Concepts & Operations*
- *Geometry and Spatial Concepts*
- *Patterns*
- *Measurement (includes graphing)*

In today's world, a strong mathematical foundation is crucial for future success. From identifying numerals to being able to count "how many," a strong base of math knowledge is very important to young children.

The program recognizes the importance of a strong foundation in this area and incorporates experiences that involve math in a meaningful way. For instance, children may build towers with blocks and measure them with a yardstick. Then they may count to discover how many blocks were used to make their towers. Older children can then graph to compare and contrast their towers.

## What Development Looks Like: (Birth - age 4)

### Number Concepts & Operations:

- *An infant listens while you count during a group game and THEN...*
- *Imitates counting and THEN...*
- *Counts to 5 and beyond by him/herself and THEN...*
- *Groups items based on common characteristics and THEN...*
- *Compares two groups to see which has more and which has less and THEN...*
- *Names numerals (up to 10) and THEN...*
- *Counts up to 20 and THEN...*
- *Begins to understand that a group can be divided into parts and THEN...*
- *May be able to count to 100*

### Geometry & Spatial Concepts:

- *An infant or toddler explores shapes when playing with blocks and THEN...*
- *Uses positional words (e.g., over, under, between, etc.) in conversation and THEN...*
- *Identifies basic shapes (circle, square, triangle) and THEN...*
- *Identifies 3-dimensional shapes (e.g., sphere, cube, cylinder).*

### Patterns:

- *A two or three-year old copies a simple pattern and THEN...*
- *Extends a simple pattern and THEN...*
- *Creates new patterns.*

### Measurement:

- *An older two-year old or three-year old understands that things can be measured to find their height, weight, length and THEN...*
- *Measures using nonstandard and then standard methods and THEN...*
- *Understands that a graph represents data and THEN...*
- *Begins to design own graphs and charts.*



# Science Knowledge

## Science Knowledge

Program Symbol = 

Science knowledge encompasses:

- *Exploring and Thinking Like a Scientist*
- *Observation Skills*
- *Knowledge about the World (Natural/Physical)*

Science. We do not realize it but science is all around us! The area of science knowledge defines what children know about their natural and physical world and how they go about finding out more about it.

In today's world, science knowledge is very important. The program engages children in science by challenging them to explore new concepts and to approach common ones in a new way. For instance, during a unit on backyard animals, the children may discover new animals and learn their names. At the same time, they may be invited to take existing knowledge and apply it in a new way. For instance, the children may already know that birds make nests but they may take that knowledge deeper by making their own nests using mud, sticks, and grass. Also, a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) focus is built into each unit as well.



## What Development Looks Like: (Birth - age 4)

### Exploring & Thinking Like a Scientist:

- *An infant responds to his/her environment and shows preferences for familiar things and people and THEN...*
- *Explores cause and effect in a simple way (e.g., shaking a rattle) and THEN...*
- *Asks questions to gain information and THEN...*
- *Participates in simple experiments and THEN...*
- *Makes and tests hypotheses.*

### Observation Skills:

- *An infant or toddler use observation to learn and THEN...*
- *Uses simple tools to observe (e.g., magnifier or binoculars) and THEN...*
- *Compares and contrasts when experimenting and exploring.*

### Knowledge about the World (Natural/Physical):

- *Infants, toddlers and two-year olds use senses to gain information about their world and THEN...*
- *Can identify how living and nonliving things are the same and how they are different and THEN...*
- *Analyzes data in order to make conclusions and THEN...*
- *Uses books and computers to gain information about the natural world that is not easily experienced first-hand.*



# Logic & Reasoning



## Logic & Reasoning Program Symbol = ?

Logic and reasoning are critical areas of development for future success in school and life. This area encompasses:

- *Problem-Solving*
- *Reasoning*
- *Using Symbols to Represent*

The ability to problem-solve and reason are skills that most of us use on a daily basis. Children should be provided with a variety of activities and experiences that challenge them to use these skills on a daily basis.

In the program, you will find many activities where children are invited to solve problems and practice reasoning skills. For instance, when given an assortment of boxes, pillows, and blankets, children may be challenged to use these materials to make their own obstacle course.

## What Development Looks Like: (Birth - age 4)

### Problem-Solving:

- *An infant or toddler uses nonverbal methods to show he/she has a problem and THEN...*
- *Asks questions and THEN...*
- *Makes and tests possible solutions and THEN...*
- *Solves problems by using many strategies.*

### Reasoning:

- *An infant, toddler or two-year old is curious about how things work and THEN...*
- *Answers questions that require reasoning and THEN...*
- *Uses reasoning when coming to conclusions.*

### Using Symbols to Represent:

- *An older two-year old or three-year old uses toys or other materials to represent other things (e.g., a block for a telephone, a bucket for a drum) and THEN...*
- *Adds a variety of props into his/her dramatic play*



# Approaches to Learning

## Approaches to Learning

Program Symbol = 😊

This area includes:

- *Curiosity and Desire to Learn*
- *Persistence*
- *Cooperation*

Don't we all want our children to have a love for learning? Absolutely! This area addresses how children approach learning new things. Are they curious? Do they want to learn? Do they stick with a tough task?

Providing experiences that are aligned to each child's developmental level is critical for success in this area. When activities are "on target" and interesting, children cannot help being engaged and excited about learning!

Our goal in the program is to provide children with opportunities to learn new things in a way that is engaging and fun! From working together to keep a beach ball on a sheet (like a parachute) to cooking a special snack to share, the program is packed with activities that promote this area of development.

## What Development Looks Like: (Birth - age 4)

### Curiosity and Desire to Learn:

- *An infant or toddler shows interest (brief) in new things and THEN...*
- *Tries new things when helped by an adult and THEN...*
- *Shows excitement when new activities or concepts are presented and THEN...*
- *Tries new things independently.*

### Persistence:

- *An toddler starts to play with a toy for a longer period of time and THEN...*
- *Repeats activities in order to get better at them and THEN...*
- *Strives to reach goals independently and THEN...*
- *Follows through on plans that will help him/her reach a personal goal.*

### Cooperation:

- *An infant or toddler watches others and THEN...*
- *Interacts with others for short periods of time and THEN...*
- *Participates in parallel play (side-by-side) and THEN...*
- *Participates in cooperative play with other children and adults.*



# Social Studies Knowledge



## Social Studies Knowledge

Program Symbol = 

Social studies knowledge addresses what children know about their families, community, and world. This area encompasses:

- Knowledge of Family & Community
- Cultural Difference (People & Places)
- Caring for the Environment

Children's understanding of their world begins in their homes and community. It then extends outward to their cities, states, countries, and world.

In the program, you will find activities and experiences for young children to explore their own families and communities as well as cultural events and celebrations specific to their own families. This is an area of the program you will want to customize and expand upon based on the children and families in your group.

### What Development Looks Like: (Birth - age 4)

#### Knowledge of Family & Community:

- A toddler points to pictures of family members and THEN...
- Talks about family members and THEN...
- Talks about family events and activities and THEN...
- Explores common community helpers and THEN...
- Pretends to be a common community helpers during dramatic play.

#### Cultural Difference (People & Places):

- A three or four-year old compares his/her own family to other families and THEN...
- Is able to describe family traditions and THEN...
- Compares and contrasts people living in other countries with their own.

#### Caring for the Environment:

- A toddler or two-year old puts a used paper cup in the trash can and THEN
- Learns that some things can be recycled and puts these items in the recycling bin and THEN...
- Turns off water when brushing teeth in order to save water and THEN...
- Helps care for living things both inside and out.



# Social & Emotional Development

## Social & Emotional Development

Program Symbol = 

This area includes:

- *Social Interactions & Relationships*
- *Self-Concept*
- *Emotions & Self-Regulation*
- *Character Education*

Getting along with others, feeling good about yourself, and knowing how to express wants and needs appropriately all fall under the area of social and emotional development. While probably one of the least "taught" areas of development, most would argue it is probably THE most important.

Young children need to learn in an environment where they feel secure enough to try new activities. In addition, they thrive in an environment where teachers are actively involved in their learning...asking questions, engaging them in conversation, and planning experiences designed to meet their needs and interests.

The program's design provides you with the tools you need to structure the environment for success, thus building each child's self-concept. The group experiences are a wonderful tool for promoting self-regulation skills and cooperation. The program's flexible design invites you to adapt and modify the activities to meet the individual needs and interests of the children you care for to make them "just right!"



## What Development Looks Like: (Birth - age 4)

### Social Interactions & Relationships:

- *An infant coos and smiles at others and THEN...*
- *Demonstrates separation anxiety when familiar adults are not present and THEN...*
- *Understands the meaning of "no" and THEN...*
- *Begins to interact with others during play and THEN...*
- *Follows simple rules during group experiences and THEN...*
- *Shows empathy for others and THEN...*
- *Works with others to solve social problems.*

### Self-Concept:

- *An infant or toddler points to things he/she wants and THEN...*
- *Says things like, "I can do it myself!" in order to be more independent and THEN...*
- *Displays confidence and takes pride in accomplishments and THEN...*
- *Shares information about self and culture with pride.*

### Emotions & Self-Regulation:

- *An infant or toddlers uses nonverbal methods (e.g., facial expressions and movements) to express emotions and THEN...*
- *Uses facial expressions and body language to display many different feelings and emotions and THEN...*
- *Increasingly uses words to express feelings and emotions and THEN...*
- *Shows more and more self-control, especially when frustrated or upset.*



# Creative Arts

## Creative Arts

Program Symbol = 

Creative arts encompasses:

- Music & Dance
- Fine Arts
- Dramatic Play

Children love art! From painting to dressing up, the creative arts are an area that can be used as springboard for learning in many other areas.

In the program, you will find an abundance of creative art activities children can enjoy in their own way. Art projects are open-ended, focusing on the process instead of the product. Numerous songs are incorporated into the activities that invite children to sing and dance. Dramatic play experiences invite children to work together and use their imaginations as they build language and social skills.



## What Development Looks Like: (Birth - age 4)

### Music & Dance:

- An infant turns his/her head toward music and THEN...
- Shakes rattles to make music and THEN...
- Attempts to sing along with songs and THEN...
- Uses a variety of items to make music, including instruments and THEN...
- Expresses feelings and emotions through music and movement.

### Fine Arts:

- An infant tries to make marks with crayons or markers and THEN...
- Scribbles and THEN...
- Begins to make recognizable drawings and THEN...
- Draws more detailed drawings that include recognizable shapes, figures, etc. and THEN...
- Is able to describe his/her art to others.

### Dramatic Play:

- An infant or toddler watches others as they participate in dramatic play and THEN...
- Participates in dramatic play when led by an adult and THEN...
- Interacts with other children during dramatic play and THEN...
- Assigns and assumes roles when participating in dramatic play with other children.



# Physical Development & Health



## Physical Development & Health

Program Symbol = 

The Physical Development & Health area includes:

- *Gross Motor Skills*
- *Fine Motor Skills*
- *Knowledge and Practice of Healthy Habits*

From kicking a ball to grasping a rattle, children work on developing motor skills every day. The area of physical development and health encompasses skills such as these and much, much more.

Young children need opportunities to practice and master both fine and gross motor skills on a daily basis. As with any new skill, practice makes perfect! Young children enjoy using their hands to explore and moving their bodies to play. Experiences such as these develop both their fine and gross motor skills in natural ways that are also fun!

The program includes a variety of experiences that invite children to use motor skills, both gross and fine, in fun and engaging ways. From tossing balls into a clothesbasket to picking up cotton balls with kitchen tongs, activities included in the program use common, everyday items to help children develop motor skills. Plus, you will find, healthy habits, such as washing hands and eating healthy foods, integrated into the program in meaningful ways.

With the problem of childhood obesity plaguing too many young children, it is critical to get them "movin' and shakin!" The program provides numerous songs and action rhymes designed specifically to get children active. In addition, an assortment of outdoor experiences are part of the program and promote the importance of daily exercise.

## What Development Looks Like: (Birth - age 4)

### Gross Motor Skills:

- *An infant moves with the help of an adult and THEN...*
- *Crawls and THEN...*
- *Walks with help and THEN...*
- *Walks independently and THEN...*
- *Plays with a large ball and THEN...*
- *Climbs up a short ladder and THEN...*
- *Attempts to kick a ball and THEN...*
- *Pedals a tricycle and steers and THEN...*
- *Demonstrates increasing coordination and THEN...*
- *Walks forward and backward and THEN...*
- *Climbs up stairs, ramps, ladders, etc. easily without adult support and THEN...*
- *Rides and pedals with control and THEN...*
- *Kicks and throws a ball with control.*

### Fine Motor Skills:

- *An infant grasps a rattle or other toy with entire hand (palmar grasp) and THEN...*
- *Uses fingers and thumb to manipulate things and THEN...*
- *Connects things (e.g., blocks) that go together with occasional assistance and THEN...*
- *Manipulates toys and other items with increasing control and THEN...*
- *Draws and writes simple pictures, shapes and words, including own name.*

### Knowledge and Practice of Healthy Habits:

- *An infant or toddler participates willingly in daily hygiene routines such as diapering and washing hands and THEN...*
- *Begins to complete self-help tasks such as washing hands with some assistance and THEN...*
- *Washes hands on own and THEN...*
- *Begins potty training and THEN...*
- *Attempts to use a facial tissue when needed and THEN...*
- *Uses potty on own and THEN...*
- *Understands the importance of eating healthy foods and getting enough rest.*

# GWE Learning Indicators

The following two pages detail the specific learning indicators addressed in the *Gee Whiz* curriculum. These indicators are tied to the 10 developmental areas detailed on pages 21-31 of this User's Guide. In addition, you will find a chart in the back of each Teaching Guide that details the specific learning indicators addressed by each activity. You should find this chart helpful as you assess children and plan individual activities throughout the year. Please note that the **Gee Whiz Education Learning Indicators align with state and national standards**. To see the alignment chart for your state, please visit our website.

## Language Development - 🗨️

- LD1 Understands spoken language
- LD2 Understands and then uses an ever increasing vocabulary
- LD3 Uses language to express ideas, wants, and needs
- LD4 Increasingly engages adults and other children in conversations

## Literacy Knowledge - 📖

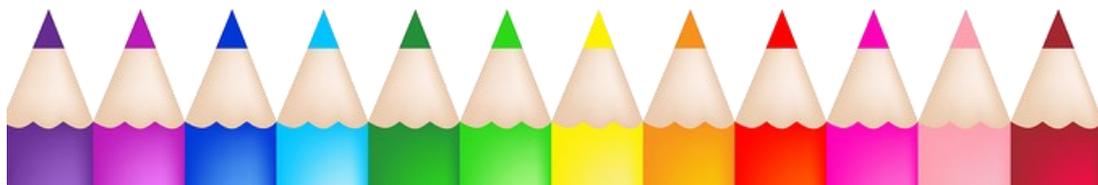
- LK1 Shows an interest in books and understands stories are a way of sharing information
- LK2 Understands that language is made up of words, which can be broken down into syllables
- LK3 Begins to name letters and identify their sounds
- LK4 Understands concepts about print (e.g., reading from left to right, logos as symbols, etc.)
- LK5 Begins to use a variety of writing tools to use writing (invented or true) as a way to convey thoughts and ideas

## Math Knowledge - ①

- MK1 Understands that numbers tell "how many"
- MK2 Recognizes that numbers go in a specific order
- MK3 Recognizes shapes and positional concepts
- MK4 Creates, imitates and/or extends patterns
- MK5 Utilizes measurement (standard and nonstandard) to compare and contrast objects (includes graphing)
- MK6 Sorts or groups objects based on common characteristics

## Science Knowledge - 🔍

- SK1 Utilizes observation and other senses to explore and gather information about objects and experiences
- SK2 Makes and tests predictions using simple experimentation
- SK3 Gathers information about the natural world through hands-on exploration



# GWE Learning Indicators

## Logic and Reasoning - ?

- LR1 Demonstrates the ability to identify a problem and then seeks ways to solve it
- LR2 Understands that symbols or objects can be used to represent different things

## Approaches to Learning - 😊

- AL1 Shows interest in many topics and a desire to try new things
- AL2 Displays persistence when completing tasks and is able to avoid distractions
- AL3 Engages in cooperative group experiences

## Social Studies Knowledge - 🌐

- SS1 Understands how families are unique and different
- SS2 Develops a basic understanding of community, including common jobs
- SS3 Recognizes the importance of caring for the environment
- SS4 Develops a baseline understanding of how the past affects us and our community

## Social & Emotional Development - ❤️

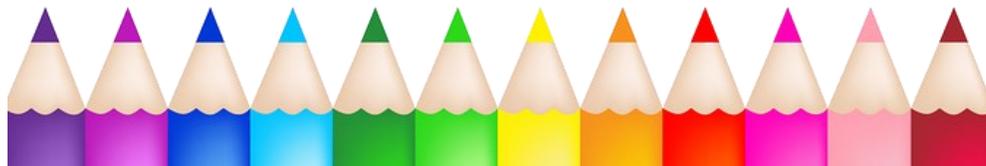
- SE1 Demonstrates a secure relationship with caregivers or other adults as well as positive interactions with other children
- SE2 Demonstrates a positive self-concept by sharing preferences, expressing feelings freely and displaying confidence
- SE3 Demonstrates self-regulation by handling emotions in an appropriate way and following simple rules
- SE4 Demonstrates a range of appropriate emotions

## Creative Arts and Music - 🎵 and 🖋️

- CA1 Participates in musical activities including singing and utilizing instruments
- CA2 Uses movement and dance to express ideas and emotions
- CA3 Utilizes a variety of art materials (both two and three-dimensional) to express self
- CA4 Engages in pretend play with, or without, the use of props

## Physical Development & Health - 🖐️

- PD1 Understands the importance of exercise and rest
- PD2 Takes pride in caring for self (e.g., brushing teeth, dressing, eating healthy foods, etc.)
- PD3 Practices safe habits and understands basic safety rules
- PD4 Demonstrates gross motor skills (e.g., running, hopping, skipping, etc.)
- PD5 Demonstrates fine motor control (e.g., writing, pouring, cutting, etc.)



# What Are Those Symbols?

## Learning Connections!

As research has shown, children do not learn skills in isolation. Instead, they integrate many skills into one experience. For instance, a child playing in the sand develops fine motor skills, practices cooperation, explores cause & effect and so much more! All activities included in the GWE program address multiple developmental areas at the same time.

At the beginning of each day, you will see a cumulative list of all of the areas addressed by the activities. It looks like this:

**DAY 1**  
**Unit:** Fantastic Friends  
**Today's Focus:** What is a Friend?  
**Developmental Areas Addressed Today:**



The picture codes here represent all of the developmental areas you will cover if you complete all of the experiences planned for the day. (For more information on developmental areas & codes, see p. 20-34).

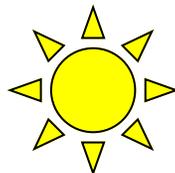
Each activity also has specific areas it addresses listed in symbols. Here is an example:

The picture codes here represent the developmental areas you will cover if you complete this specific experience with the children.

**Building Blocks of Friendship**  
(Toddlers–4 years,       )

**Get Moving!**

Activities with this symbol help you address Let's Move! Child Care guidelines [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov).



Activities with this symbol can be conducted outside if desired.



Activities with this symbol address Character Education.

# Section 4: Philosophy, Research & More

Did you



today?



The Philosophy and Research Behind the  
Gee Whiz Curriculum

# Program Philosophy

There is a wealth of research about how young children learn and how this impacts how teachers should teach. At Gee Whiz Education, our belief is that a balanced approach is best. Below you will find a short description of the main philosophies upon which the program is based along with what you may see in your own children that defines each researcher's discovery.

## Jean Piaget

Piaget believed that young children learn through a series of developmental steps as they use their senses to gain knowledge about their environment.

During his research, Piaget discovered that children go through four stages of development: sensorimotor (birth-2), preoperational (2-7), concrete operational (7-11), and formal operational (11-16).

Piaget found that children use their senses and repetition to learn to differentiate between objects... how they are the same, how they are different, and how their actions on the object affect it. He concluded that all of this exploration helps children gain knowledge that they then apply when approaching new objects and situations.

### What does this look like?

- A toddler fills a bucket with water and dumps it out over and over again (sensorimotor).
- An infant squeezes a soft ball and then puts it in his/her mouth (sensorimotor).
- A preschooler discovers a box can be a hat or a tool for carrying blocks (preoperational),



## Lev Vygotsky

Vygotsky believed that the teacher has a crucial role in learning. His/Her role is to support children's learning until they become more confident. At this point, the teacher can reduce the level of support. This is often referred to as scaffolding.

Vygotsky also believed that language starts as a tool a child uses for external socialization but over time, becomes a type of "inner speech" he/she uses to work through complex tasks (e.g., talking to yourself in your head when doing a difficult task).

### What does this look like?

- Blowing bubbles for an infant to watch and talking about how they float into the sky.
- Inviting a toddler to try to blow the bubbles him/herself. How hard does he/she need to blow?
- Challenging a preschooler to find other tools that he/she could use to make bubble wands.

# Program Philosophy

## Erik Erikson

Erikson believed that children go through a series of stages of psychosocial development. For young children, the three stages are:

- Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust (birth-1)
- Autonomy vs. Shame (1-3)
- Initiative vs. Guilt (3-6)

Erikson believed that as children go through these phases, they develop a sense of initiative and empowerment. The teacher's role is to create an environment where children feel safe to test their ideas and explore so they feel free and confident.

### What does this look like?

- *An infant that might be new to your program learns to trust that you will come when he/she cries.*
- *A two-year-old wanting to learn to use the potty like the older children.*
- *A preschooler trying to learn how to zip his/her own coat.*

## Sara Smilansky

According to Smilansky, there are four types of play, all of which are **very** important to the overall development of children:

- **Functional Play** - Repeated actions on movements with or without objects
- **Constructive Play** - Building or creating with objects
- **Dramatic Play** - Acting out roles in a make-believe situation
- **Games with Rules** - There are rules that must be followed and they are established before the game begins

These different types of play are very evident when watching children play. For instance, when given a cardboard box, most toddlers will just want to climb in and out. An older child, however, would be much more likely to turn that box into a boat or a car. Knowing that children engage in different types of play helps teachers plan experiences that are



### What does this look like?

- *An infant banging a rattle on his/her high chair tray.*
- *A toddler stacking large cardboard boxes.*
- *A preschooler pretending to be a veterinarian caring for plush animals.*
- *A group of school-age children playing, "Tag."*

# Research Basis Behind GWE

At Gee Whiz Education, we want you to know that all of the activities, experiences, and components we develop for our products are based on the latest research on early childhood development and learning. Not only do we take into account new and emerging research findings, we also incorporate theoretical foundations as well. The following list includes the theories, published research and position statements that provide strong evidence for our approach to teaching and learning.

## Theorists

Erikson, E. (1963). *Childhood and society*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Piaget, J., & Inhelder B. (1969). *The psychology of the child* (H. Weaver, Trans.). New York: Basic Books

Smilansky, S., & Shefatya, L. (1990). *Facilitating play: A medium for promoting cognitive, socio-emotional, and academic development in young children*. Gaithersburg, MD: Psychological and Educational Publications.)

Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language* (Revised). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

## Published Research

Bergen, D., & Cosica, J. (2001). *Brain research and childhood education: Implications for educators*. Olney, MD: Association of Childhood Education International.

Berghout Austin, A., Blevins-Knabe, B., Ota, C., Rowe, T., Knudsen Lindaeur, S. (2011). Mediators of early preschoolers' mathematics concepts. *Early Child Development and Care*, 181(9), 1181-1198.

Essa, E. & Burnham, M. (2009). *Informing our practice: Useful research on young children's development*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Ferrar, H., Harms, T., & Cryer, D. (1995). *Places for growing: How to Improve Your Family Child Care Home*. New York, NY. The Rockefeller Foundation.

Gillies, R. (2011). Promoting thinking, problem-solving, and reasoning during small group discussions. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 17(1), 73-89.

Hart, T., & Risley, B. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children*. Baltimore, MD: Brooks Publishing.

Hedges, H., Cullen, J., & Jordan, B. (2011). Early years curriculum: Funds of knowledge as a conceptual framework for children's interests. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43(2), 185-205.

Hong, S. & Diamond, K. (2012). Two approaches to teaching young children science concepts, vocabulary and scientific problem-solving skills. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 27(2), 295-305.

Jensen, E. (2000). Moving with the brain in mind. *Educational Leadership*, 58(3), 34-37.



# Research Basis Behind GWE

Jensen, E. (2008). *Teaching with the brain in mind* (Revised). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing Early Literacy: A Scientific Synthesis of Early Literacy Development and Implications for Intervention*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved on July 17, 2012, from <http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf>

Phillips, B. & Morse, E. (2011). Family child care learning environments: Caregiver knowledge and practices related to early literacy and mathematics. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 39(3), 213-222.

Quintero, E. (2010) Something to say: Children learn through story. *Early Education and Development*, v2(n3), 372-391.

Shonkoff, J.P., & Phillips, D.A. (Eds.). (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Swanson, J., Raab, M., & Dunst, C. (2011). Strengthening family capacity to provide young children everyday natural learning opportunities. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 9(1), 66-80.

## Position Statements

National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC)™:

- NAFCC's Vision for Family Child Care (2007)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)®:

- Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs (2009 version)
- Early Childhood Mathematics: Promoting Good Beginnings (2002)
- Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation (2003)
- Learning to Read and Write (1998, with the International Reading Association)

All NAEYC® Position Statements can be found on their website at: <http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements>

NAFCC is a registered trademark of the National Association of Family Child Care.  
NAEYC is a registered trademark of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.



# Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

As an educator of young children, it is critical for you to know what developmentally appropriate practice is and how these guidelines can help you structure the learning environment and plan activities for your program. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)<sup>®</sup> developed a position statement to help early childhood educators follow developmentally appropriate practice. You can find this position statement document, along with a great deal of additional helpful information, on their website <http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements>.

**So, how can you ensure a developmentally appropriate approach in your program?**



## You can ...

- Support, encourage, and guide children
- Structure the arrangement of materials so they are appealing to children
- Organize daily and weekly schedules that have plenty of time built in for exploration and free play
- Provide a variety of materials for children both inside and outside
- Invite children to explore their own interests
- Utilize an approach to teaching and learning that keeps children's cultural and linguistic background in mind
- Plan activities that are appropriate for the developmental level of each child
- Ensure each activity addresses multiple developmental areas
- View curriculum as a way to meet specific goals for each child
  - View assessment as a naturally occurring part of your program
  - Provide a balance of teacher- and child-guided experiences each day
  - Thoroughly understand child development for all ages in your care and share this information with parents when asked



*This document is an independent publication of Gee Whiz Education, LLC and is not affiliated with, nor has it been authorized, sponsored, or otherwise approved by NAEYC<sup>®</sup>.*

# Section 5: Implementing the Gee Whiz Curriculum



Description and Use of Components  
Included in the Gee Whiz Curriculum

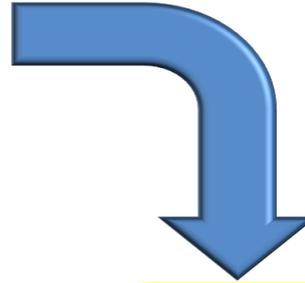
# Getting Started

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!

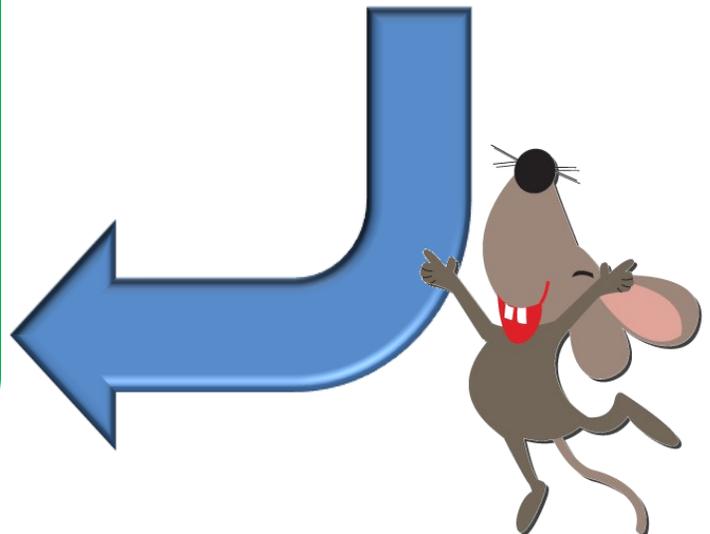
Next, prepare for your first day.

- 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

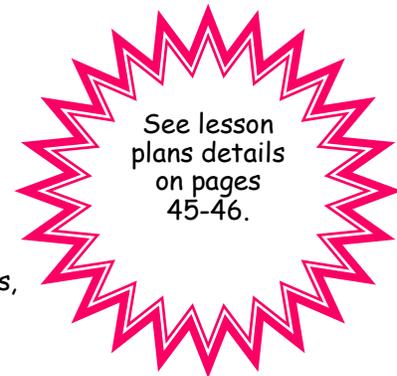
The program contains many components that all work together in a comprehensive way. All components are digital files available to Paid Subscribers on our website [www.geewhizeducation.com](http://www.geewhizeducation.com). The files are presented in a PDF format. This means you will need to have Adobe 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.

**Get Ready!**  
**Exploring Together: Deliver the Package!**  
(All ages, 2-5, 6-8, 9-12)

**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, 5-8, 9-12)

**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, 2-5, 6-8, 9-12)

**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, 5-8, 9-12)

**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.

### 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.

### 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?

### 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!

### Your Own Activities

# Curriculum Components

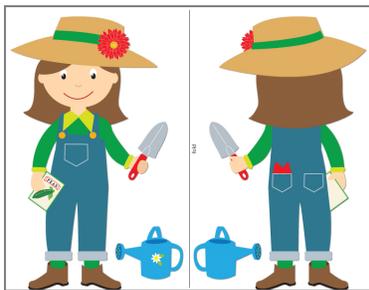
## Story Props

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!



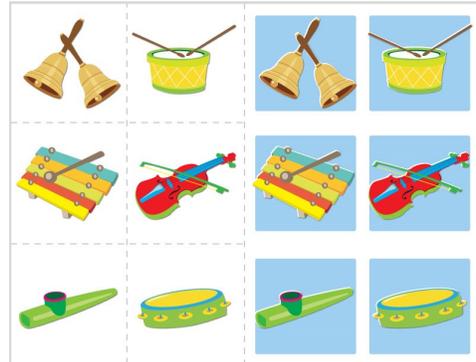
# Curriculum Components

## 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:		

© 2010 Gee Whiz Education, LLC www.geewhizeducation.com

# 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.

# 2017-2018 Outline

September 2017	October 2017	November 2017
<p><b>UNIT #1: Sensory Fun</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are My Senses?</li> <li>• Sight and Sound</li> <li>• Touching to Learn</li> <li>• Tasting - What Is Safe to Taste?</li> <li>• Smells - Good and Bad</li> <li>• Sensory Body Parts</li> <li>• Opposites: Hot/Cold</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Kindness</li> <li>• STEM: Using Senses to Learn</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Happy, Healthy &amp; Safe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eating Healthy Foods</li> <li>• Getting Plenty of Rest</li> <li>• Why is Exercise Important?</li> <li>• Feelings &amp; Emotional Wellness</li> <li>• Healthy Teeth Are Happy Teeth</li> <li>• Doctors &amp; Nurses Keep Me Healthy</li> <li>• Police Officers &amp; Firefighters Keep Me Safe</li> <li>• Opposites: Safe/Dangerous</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Respect</li> <li>• STEM: Stress and the Body</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNIT #1: It's Harvest Time!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Foods Are Harvested?</li> <li>• Farm Tools &amp; Equipment</li> <li>• Tractors &amp; Wagons</li> <li>• What Grains Are Harvested?</li> <li>• Baskets and Boxes</li> <li>• Packing and Shipping Foods</li> <li>• Farmer's Market Fun</li> <li>• Opposites: Fresh/Stale</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Responsibility</li> <li>• STEM: Keeping Foods Fresh</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Fun in the Kitchen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kitchen Appliances and How They Work</li> <li>• Kitchen Tools</li> <li>• Baking and Cooking</li> <li>• Washing and Cleaning Up</li> <li>• Fresh, Packaged and Frozen Foods</li> <li>• Safety in the Kitchen</li> <li>• Opposites: Clean/Dirty</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Kindness</li> <li>• STEM: Keeping Foods Fresh</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNIT #1: Cool Colors &amp; Super Shapes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary &amp; Secondary Colors</li> <li>• Mixing and Creating New Colors</li> <li>• 2-Dimensional Shapes</li> <li>• 3-Dimensional Shapes</li> <li>• Exploring Colors in Nature</li> <li>• How Do Artists Use Color?</li> <li>• Opposites: Black/White</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Honesty</li> <li>• STEM: Mixing Colors</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT 2: Exploring Patterns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a Pattern?</li> <li>• Types of Patterns</li> <li>• Polka Dots and Stripes</li> <li>• Animals That Have Patterns on Their Bodies</li> <li>• Patterns on Fabrics</li> <li>• Musical Patterns</li> <li>• Patterns in Words (advanced)</li> <li>• Opposites: First/Last</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Respect</li> <li>• STEM: Animals &amp; Camouflage</li> </ul>
<p><b>December 2017</b></p> <p><b>UNIT #1: How Much? How Many?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Are Numerals?</li> <li>• Counting &amp; Ordination</li> <li>• Numerals in Our World</li> <li>• How Do Adults Use Numerals?</li> <li>• Graphing</li> <li>• Matching Numerals to Sets</li> <li>• Opposites: Few/Many</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Honesty</li> <li>• STEM: Gathering Data</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Let's Sing &amp; Dance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical Instruments</li> <li>• Different Types of Music</li> <li>• Tempo &amp; Rhythm</li> <li>• Music &amp; Dance around the World</li> <li>• Expressing Feelings through Music &amp; Dance</li> <li>• Opposites: Fast/Slow</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Kindness</li> <li>• STEM: How Do Instruments Work?</li> </ul>	<p><b>January 2018</b></p> <p><b>UNIT #1: Getting Dressed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clothes I Wear</li> <li>• Clothes Workers Wear</li> <li>• Types of Clothing</li> <li>• Choosing Clothing to Match the Weather</li> <li>• Buttons, Snaps, Zippers</li> <li>• Caring for Clothing</li> <li>• Places People Buy Clothing &amp; Shoes</li> <li>• Opposites: On/Off</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Responsibility</li> <li>• STEM: How Do Fasteners Work?</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Cups, Plates &amp; Spoons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types and Sizes of Cups &amp; Plates</li> <li>• What is Volume?</li> <li>• Foods You Eat with a Spoon or on a Plate</li> <li>• Using Cups and Spoons in New Ways</li> <li>• Special Cups and Spoons (for cooking)</li> <li>• Opposites: Curved/Straight</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Honesty</li> <li>• STEM: Why Are Spoons Important?</li> </ul>	<p><b>February 2018</b></p> <p><b>UNIT #1: Build It</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Who Build Things</li> <li>• Machines and Tools Used for Building</li> <li>• Building Materials</li> <li>• Types of Buildings</li> <li>• Safety When Building</li> <li>• Opposites: Hard/Soft</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Responsibility</li> <li>• STEM: Building a Strong Foundation</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Read It! Write It!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning about Letters &amp; Words</li> <li>• Letters &amp; Words in Our World</li> <li>• Places You Can Find Letters &amp; Words</li> <li>• Exploring Writing Tools</li> <li>• Different Languages</li> <li>• Why Do People Read &amp; Write?</li> <li>• Opposites: Many/Few</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Respect</li> <li>• STEM: Learning about Printing</li> </ul>

*\*Please note: Additions, adaptations and modifications may be made to this outline as needed.*

# 2017-2018 Outline

March 2018	April 2018	May 2018
<p><b>UNIT #1: My Feet and Hands Can...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Can My Hands Do?</li> <li>• What Can My Feet Do?</li> <li>• Counting Fingers &amp; Toes</li> <li>• Do Animals Have Hands &amp; Feet?</li> <li>• Tools for Helping People with Mobility Challenges</li> <li>• Opposites: Hold/Release</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Responsibility</li> <li>• STEM: Solving Mobility Challenges</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Let's Get Messy!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art Can Be Messy</li> <li>• Dirt + Water = Mud</li> <li>• Messy Jobs</li> <li>• Washing Hands</li> <li>• Cleaning Up</li> <li>• Messy Foods</li> <li>• Opposites: Wet/Dry</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Honesty</li> <li>• STEM: Tools &amp; Techniques for Cleaning Up</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNIT #1: Over, Under &amp; Through</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traveling Over, Under &amp; Through</li> <li>• Bridges</li> <li>• Tunnels</li> <li>• Obstacle Courses</li> <li>• Opposites: Over/Under</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Kindness</li> <li>• STEM: Building Bridges &amp; Tunnels</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Scoop and Dig</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tools Used for Scooping</li> <li>• Tools Used for Digging</li> <li>• Construction Equipment That Scoops &amp; Digs</li> <li>• Animals That Scoop &amp; Dig</li> <li>• Foods You Can Scoop &amp; Dig</li> <li>• Opposites: Full/Empty</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Responsibility</li> <li>• STEM: How Tools Help Do Work</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNIT #1: Can You Climb?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe Climbing Places</li> <li>• What Body Parts Do You Use When Climbing?</li> <li>• Animals That Climb</li> <li>• Jobs That Involve Climbing</li> <li>• Ladders Are Used for Climbing</li> <li>• Opposites: High/Low</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Respect</li> <li>• STEM: The Law of Gravity</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Look Up!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals That Fly</li> <li>• Insects That Fly</li> <li>• Machines That Fly</li> <li>• If I Could Fly...</li> <li>• Making Things That Fly</li> <li>• Games That Involve Making Things Fly</li> <li>• Opposites: Up/Down</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Kindness</li> <li>• STEM: How Do Airplanes Fly?</li> </ul>
June 2018	July 2018	August 2018
<p><b>UNIT #1: Old MacDonald</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a Farm?</li> <li>• Animals That Live on the Farm</li> <li>• Caring For Farm Animals</li> <li>• Planting and Caring for Crops</li> <li>• Barns and Silos</li> <li>• Opposites: Big/Little</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Responsibility</li> <li>• STEM: Planting Seeds</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Who Lives Here?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different Types of Homes</li> <li>• Homes for Pets</li> <li>• Homes Animals Build</li> <li>• Unique Homes (houseboat, treehouse)</li> <li>• Families</li> <li>• Building Materials for Homes</li> <li>• Opposites: In/Out</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Respect</li> <li>• STEM: How Do Animals Build Their Homes?</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNIT #1: Exploring the Forest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Animals Live in the Forest?</li> <li>• Types of Trees in the Forest</li> <li>• Mountains and Valleys</li> <li>• Rivers, Lakes, Ponds &amp; Streams</li> <li>• What Do Forest Animals Eat?</li> <li>• Opposites: Loud/Quiet</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Respect</li> <li>• STEM: Natural Water Sources</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: Awesome Ocean</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What Is an Ocean?</li> <li>• Waves and Currents</li> <li>• Animals That Live on the Beach</li> <li>• Animals That Live in the Ocean</li> <li>• Taking Care of the Ocean</li> <li>• Beach Safety &amp; Lifeguards</li> <li>• Boats &amp; Ships Sail on the Ocean</li> <li>• Opposites: Sink/Float</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Kindness</li> <li>• STEM: Exploring Waves</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNIT #1: Now It is Night</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nighttime Activities</li> <li>• Preparing for Bed</li> <li>• Stars, the Moon and Planets</li> <li>• Nocturnal Animals</li> <li>• Nighttime Safety</li> <li>• Opposites: Dark/Light</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Honesty</li> <li>• STEM: Earth's Rotation</li> </ul> <p><b>UNIT #2: My Family and My Friends</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a Family?</li> <li>• All Families Are Different</li> <li>• Visiting Family</li> <li>• Being a Part of a Family</li> <li>• Who Are My Friends?</li> <li>• Favorite Family Activities</li> <li>• Opposites: Near/Far</li> <li>• Character Education Focus: Respect</li> <li>• STEM: The Diversity of Families</li> </ul>

\*Please note: Additions, adaptations and modifications may be made to this outline as needed.

# Notes