

Gee Whiz Education Curriculum User's Guide



**Gee Whiz**TM
Education

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, Head Start/Early Head Start, 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 time 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.

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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 providers LOVE Gee Whiz:

Convenient & Economical

Everything you need is at your fingertips 24/7 because the curriculum “lives” online. Print only what you need/want and view the rest on your computer or tablet. No waste. No leftovers. Plus, our webinar training is FREE!

Prepares Children for School...and Life

The Gee Whiz curriculum covers all 10 developmental areas while addressing the whole child for ALL children. Children learn through exploration and hands-on experiences. It is also very easy for you to link experiences with goals and objectives through the use of our picture codes and “Learning Indicators Addressed by Activities” chart in the back of each Teaching Guide. This helps you see exactly how you are addressing state/national standards each day.

Aligned & Approved

Gee Whiz is already approved in several states for QRIS programs (with more to come) and aligned with state and national early childhood standards including the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.

Interactive & Easy-to-Use

Open-ended, child-directed activities dominate the Gee Whiz approach. Children are given choices and options are provided to help you address different developmental levels and individual needs. Plus, the activities we plan use common household materials and have clear, easy-to-follow directions

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! Additionally, adaptations for experiences are provided to help you meet the unique, individual needs of each child including those with disabilities, suspected delays, special needs and dual language learners.



Testimonials

A few months ago I decided to use a pre-made curriculum I could count on to facilitate my preparation. I tried a few boxed programs that offered quality learning and developmentally appropriate activities. However, many of the activities were difficult to follow and too advance for some of my younger toddlers. Cookie cut product art was not my idea of quality. I had briefly tried Gee Whiz Curriculum in the past, although I enjoyed the activities and topics, I had found shopping and preparing for the lessons a bit of a challenge. At this year's NAFCC Conference, I met Beth Smith (Partner with Gee Whiz) and I shared my concern with the curriculum. A week later she had modified the tools to include a list of materials for every unit. It was amazing. I could follow the list and shop for the stuff online or at a local store. Gee Whiz is simple to follow. The learning standards are specified for each activity. I know what to expect and how to observe for progress. I particularly love the suggested questions to deepen learning. I have my staff review them too. It has really made a world of difference. I will definitely share my experience with other FCC providers I support and train in the field.

Angela M. Salas, MSECS, MSRD, IBCLC, NYSELTC Level 3
Brilliant Futures Daycare & Preschool
www.brilliantfuturesdaycare.com



"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 state's 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."

Trainer/Family Child Care Mentor - Tennessee

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 use their own creativity to solve problems. It also opens the door to back-and-forth conversations. While very young children may not yet be able answer orally, they can share ideas using non-verbal communication. More advanced children, on the other hand, should be asked open-ended questions that invite them to think. For instance, "How are you going to use those materials to make a boat that will float?" The Gee Whiz curriculum includes open-ended questioning as part of our approach to teaching and learning.



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.

The Gee Whiz curriculum includes tips every day to help you model language as you interact with children. We even help you do this during routine times like diapering and meals!



Teaching "Intentionally!"

Know your children and teach with them in mind. Each child is different and has his/her own background of knowledge, strengths/areas for growth and unique needs. Keep this in mind when planning activities and experiences each day. Remember..."one size does not fit all" and you will need to modify or adjust activities to meet the individual needs and interests of the children in your group. The Gee Whiz curriculum provides guidance to help. Additionally, pages 11-21 of this guide include 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 happens when you use the magnifying glass to look at the flowers?” and “How do the flowers look different when you look at them with the magnifying glass? Why do you think that is?” As the child continues to explore while using the magnifying glass, who knows where his interests may go! Asking questions and engaging the child in conversations enables you to plan future experiences based on his interest.

On-Going Training and Professional Development

On-going training and professional development 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 at no additional cost.* This User's Guide is also an indispensable training resource for the Gee Whiz curriculum. Please consider printing it out and putting it in a 3-ring binder so you can refer to it frequently.

Gee Whiz Cohort The Gee Whiz Cohort is a wonderful way for current Gee Whiz customers as well as all providers in the field to receive training on both the curriculum and current ECE topics. The cohort is also open to Quality Specialists and those who work with providers. It is FREE to everyone.

How Does the Cohort Work? Approximately every month, Gee Whiz hosts a live webinar for customers, non-customers, Quality Specialists, etc. These webinars are held in the evening on a weekday so providers can attend without traveling or giving up their weekends. Since the cohort started in July 2019, we've hosted numerous webinars! At the conclusion of the webinar, those who would like a Certificate of Attendance MUST complete a post-assessment quiz. We also record these webinars and post them on our website under the "Training & Support" tab and on our YouTube Channel ... Gee Whiz Education Curriculum for FCC (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UcklYj0hTLIDxsdcB7Xftd9g/videos>). Recording the webinars and posting them allows providers who might not be able to attend the live version to still benefit from the training.

Approved in Pennsylvania for PQAS hours! Providers in Pennsylvania can now get PQAS hours when they register for Gee Whiz webinars via the PD Registry. We are also an Automatically Accepted Training Agency in Nebraska. We hope to be approved in more states in the future!



*Subject to change in the future.

On-Going Training and Professional Development

At Gee Whiz, we believe that training on the curriculum should not be limited to webinars or “formal” PD. So, we build “training” into the Gee Whiz curriculum in a few different ways. First, we help you better understand the “why” behind each experience and then link the “why” to the developmental areas/goals. Here’s how!

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 addressed by the experience. Here is an example:



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.

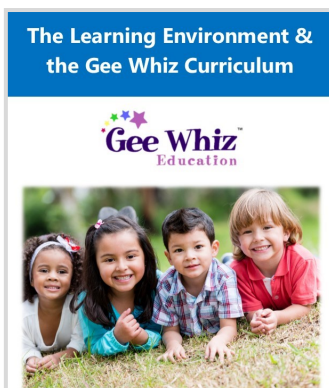
First bullet point of EVERY Gee Whiz experience explains the “why”

Each Gee Whiz experience uses picture codes to help providers connect developmental areas to the experience.

Additionally, there is a chart in the back of each Teaching Guide that details the specific Learning Indicators (skills) addressed by each experience. You can find the Learning Indicators on pages 35-36 of this User’s Guide. For the experience above, the list of Learning Indicators would be: AL2, AL3, PD4, SE2, SE3, SK1, SK3, CA1, CA4, LK3, LK4, LK5, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4

The Environment & Gee Whiz Booklet

This helpful booklet contains a wealth of information about your role in the learning environment as well as the importance of asking open-ended questions, choosing materials and more. The information contained is designed to help you prepare for your environmental ratings assessment (e.g., FCCERS-R or CLASS). You can find this booklet on our website under “Educational Resources” or you can click the picture to open this document.



Parent Involvement, Family Engagement & Gee Whiz Booklet

This booklet is packed full of information about parent involvement and family engagement. Not only does it explain the differences between the two, it provides helpful printables and tips for increasing and enhancing both parental involvement and family engagement in your program. Details are also provided about the many materials included in the Gee Whiz curriculum designed to help in both of these areas. You can find this booklet under the “Educational Resources” tab on our website or you can click the picture to open this document.



Section 2: Individualization & Authentic Assessment



Reflection (5/15/22):

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 (6/18/22):

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 and are also aligned with their unique needs.

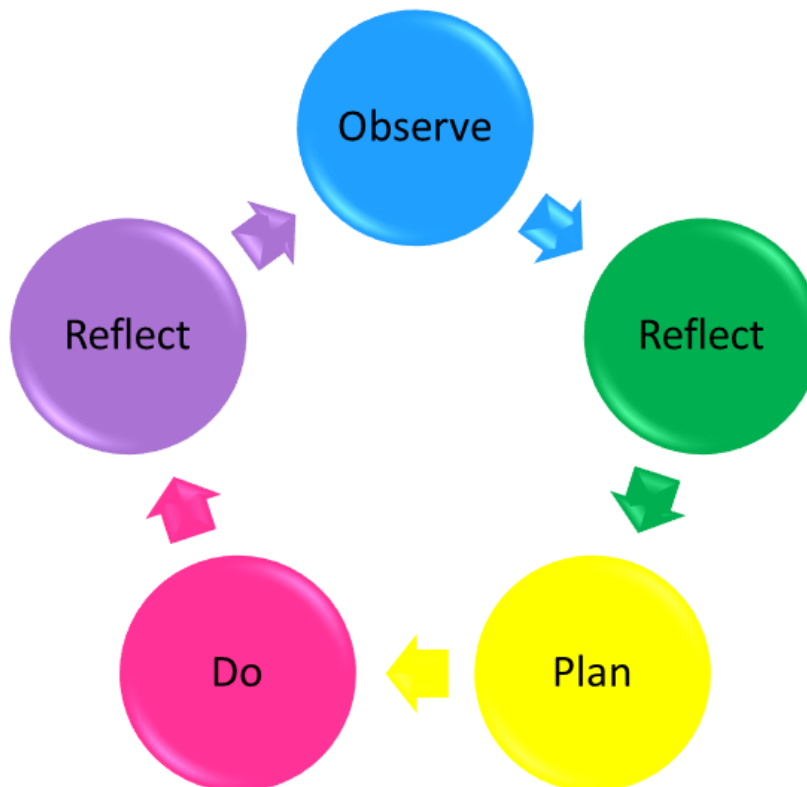
At the same time, we also understand that many educators need a helping hand with planning a curriculum. With days filled from morning to night and paperwork galore, the time required to put together a comprehensive approach that integrates many developmental areas in each activity can be a challenge ... 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 14. **Our Observe & Reflect** tool can help you! Please see pgs. 18-19.

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 15 for details on how we accomplish this goal. Again, our **Observe & Reflect** tool can help you!

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 including the needs of children with disabilities, suspected developmental delays or other special needs. Please see pages 16 and pages 20-21 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** tool 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?

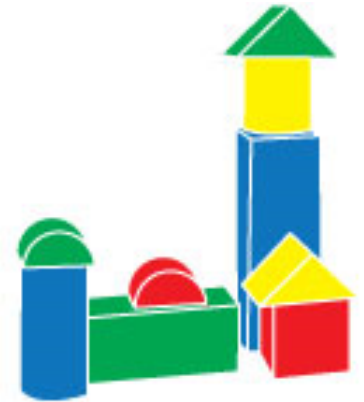
Anecdotal notes are very important because they are based on fact. They help teachers plan experiences for children based on what they know about their levels of development in all areas. They are also very helpful when talking with parents/caregivers because they are based on facts...not opinions.

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: March 15, 2022

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 3/15/22:

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 3/15/22:

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 three tools to help you achieve this goal: our Individualization Web, Observe & Reflect Grid and Customized/Individualized Lesson Planning Sheet.

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 19.

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:	

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 18 with a sample completed web on page 21.

Customized/Individualized Lesson Planning Sheet

Each Gee Whiz unit now includes a Customized/Individualized Lesson Planning Sheet you can use to help you record how you plan to adapt and individualize the Gee Whiz experiences + add your own. This planning sheet will come in extremely handy as you work with children with disabilities, suspected developmental delays or other special needs. This form is included in the program files for each unit. It is available in Word (so you can type in the boxes) or PDF (if you prefer to write).

Customized/Individualized Lesson Planning Sheet						
Unit: "A Community is..."		Dates Unit Taught:		My Name:		
	Child's Name:	Child's Name:	Child's Name:	Child's Name:	Child's Name:	Child's Name:
DAY 1 (pgs. 4-5) Exploring Together: Our Community Center/Small Group: Read to Learn Center/Small Group: Community Builders Infant: Riding in the Car Additional Activities Planned:						
DAY 2 (pgs. 6-7) Exploring Together: Who Keeps Us Safe? Center/Small Group: Drive Carefully! Center/Small Group: Pretending to Be Police Officers Infant: A Good Book Additional Activities Planned:						



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 assessments do have a place and can be used in conjunction with the Gee Whiz approach (see page 22). 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

My Name: <i>Alicia Torres</i> Date: <i>March 21, 2022</i> Time: <i>9:35 AM</i>	Child's Name: <i>Francisco</i> Child's Current Age (years & months): <i>3 years, 7 months</i>	Setting: <i>Outdoor playspace</i>
Anecdotal Note/Observation: <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>		
Reflection: <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>		
Planning - Developmental Areas to Address and Activities to Try: <i>Gross Motor Skills - pedaling a tricycle -</i> <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> <i>Social/Emotional Skills—appropriate ways of sharing emotions</i> <i>Activity: Read books with Francisco about emotions (including frustration) and use them to open the door to talking about feelings.</i>		

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 Want to Learn How to Do

* Things I Can Do

* My Family

* My Uniqueness

* Easy/Difficult

* My Feelings & Kindness



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.

Gee Whiz & Standardized or Structured Assessment Instruments

At Gee Whiz, we are asked all the time, "Does Gee Whiz contain an formal assessment?" The short answer is, "No" BUT this is intentional by design.

When we designed the Gee Whiz curriculum, we looked at state standards from all over the United States as well as the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. We dug deep to see what skills and areas of development these standards addressed and the designed Gee Whiz to address them in a comprehensive way.

Then, we looked at the most commonly utilized formal child assessment/screening tools such as Teaching Strategies GOLD®, Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, The Ounce Scale, DRDP, etc.* We examined what those assessments evaluate and compared that with the skills/developmental areas addressed in the Gee Whiz curriculum.

The result? Because Gee Whiz takes such a comprehensive approach and because we utilize picture codes (linked to the 10 developmental areas - see pgs. 24-34) plus Learning Indicators (40 specific skills - see pgs. 35-36) to help providers connect the experiences in the Gee Whiz curriculum to developmental areas and specific skills. **The curriculum also has a very important component called, "Connecting the Dots" that helps providers see at-a-glance which Gee Whiz experiences in a particular unit address a specific Learning Indicator (skill).** This component helps providers link the skills they are addressing as they do Gee Whiz experiences with the children with their chosen formal child assessment. This new component is truly a game-changer. **We would highly recommend anyone interested in learning more about this component watch our recorded webinar, "Connecting the Dots - Linking Gee Whiz Experiences with Skills & Assessments." You can find this recording on our website and YouTube channel.**

According to feedback from Quality Specialists and nationally accredited providers in many states, this approach of allowing them to choose the child assessment that works best for them is an excellent option which is also greatly appreciated. Now they can choose the formal child assessment that works best for them but use Gee Whiz as they curriculum.

Do you need developmental checklists?

Please visit our website www.geewhizeducation.com and look under the FCC Tools tab. There you will find developmental checklists for ages Birth through 4. Here is a link directly to that page:

<https://geewhizeducation.com/developmental-checklists/>



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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 35-36.

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*
- *Cardinality*
- *Geometry and Spatial Concepts*
- *Positional Concepts*
- *Patterns*
- *Estimation*
- *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 Does Math Knowledge Look 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 (including graphing):

- *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 Science Knowledge Look 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 Does Logic & Reasoning Look 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 Does Approaches to Learning Look 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
- Learning from the Past

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 Does Social Studies Knowledge Look 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 Social & Emotional Development Look 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 Does Creative Arts Development Look Like? (Birth - age 4)

Music & Dance/Movement:

- *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 Does Physical Development & Health Look 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 24-34 of this User's Guide. **In addition, our "Connecting the Dots" component is designed to help you link Gee Whiz experiences with specific skills and developmental areas.** Please see p. 72 for details on this component. You should find this component helpful as you assess children and plan individual activities throughout the year. **There is also a chart that shows which Learning Indicators each Gee Whiz experiences addresses in the back of every Teaching Guide.** Please note that the Gee Whiz Education Learning Indicators align with state and national standards as well as the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. To see the alignment chart for your state or national program, 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 - 📖

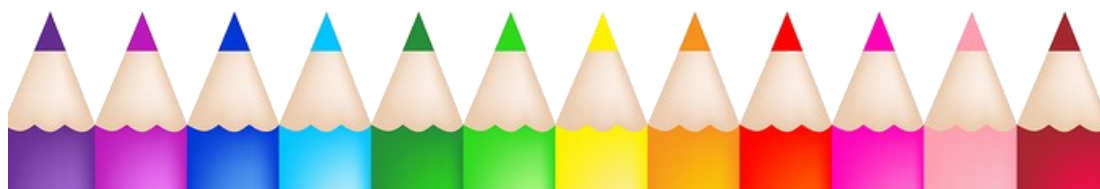
- LK1 Shows an interest in books and understands stories are a way of sharing information
- LK2 Understands that language is made up of words, which can be broken down into syllables
- LK3 Begins to name letters and identify their sounds
- LK4 Understands concepts about print (e.g., reading from left 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 - ❤️

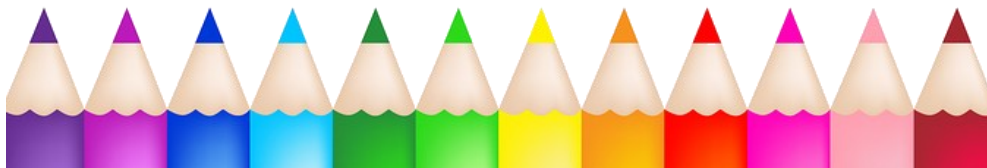
- SE1 Demonstrates a secure relationship with caregivers or other adults as well as positive interactions with other children
- SE2 Demonstrates a positive self-concept by sharing preferences, expressing feelings freely and displaying confidence
- SE3 Demonstrates self-regulation by handling emotions 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 AND multiple skills at the same time. We use picture codes, Learning Indicators AND our new Connecting the Dots component to help you achieve this goal.

PICTURE CODES: At the beginning of each day, you will see a cumulative list of all of the areas addressed by the activities. If you do ALL of the experiences we have planned, you will cover all of the areas indicated by the picture codes. 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. In this example, that is 10 areas.

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. In this example, you would cover 7 developmental areas when you do this activity.

Building Blocks of Friendship
 (Toddlers–4 years,)

LEARNING INDICATORS: The Gee Whiz curriculum covers 40 Learning Indicators (see pages 35-36). These are specific skills and link back to the 10 developmental areas. If you want to know the specific skills a Gee Whiz experience addresses, you can:

- 1) Look in the back of your Teaching Guide for the chart that lists the specific Learning Indicators addressed by each Gee Whiz experience. Here is an example.
- 2) Look in the new Connecting the Dots component (see p. 73). This component helps you connect the Learning Indicators (skills) with the Gee Whiz experiences planned for each unit. You can then link your chosen child assessment tool to the Gee Whiz Learning Indicators AND planned experiences. We have a recorded webinar about this topic. We would highly recommend you watch it! You can find the webinar on our website under the "Support" tab.

Learning Indicators Addressed By Activity

	Exploring Together	Small Group	Small Group	Infant
DAY 1	Packing the Picnic Basket LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SK1, LR1, MK1, MK2, SS1, LK1	Going on a Picnic LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, AL3, SE1, SE2, SE4, SK1, LR1, MK1, MK2, SS1, LK1	What's in the Picnic Basket? LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, PD5, PD6, SK1, LR1, MK1, MK2, SS1, LK1	Exploring Picnic Foods LD1, LD2, SK1, SK2, PD5, SE1, SE4, AL1
DAY 2	Where Should We Go? LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, PD5, PD6, SK1, LR1, MK1, MK2, SS1, LK1, CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4	Picture Codes for the Picnic! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, CA4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SK1, LR1, MK1, MK2, SS1, LK1	Learning through Books PD5, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, SK1, SK2, LK1, LK2, LK3, LK4, AL1, AL2	Going on a Picnic LD1, LD2, SK1, CA1, CA2, SE1, SE4, AL1
DAY 3	What's the Sign? LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, PD5, PD6, SK1, LR1, MK1, MK2, LR1, PD4	How Many Cars Come to Our Picnic? LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE2, SE3, SE1, SE3, SE4, PD4, MK1, MK2, MK3, SK1, SK2, LR1, AL1, AL2, AL3	Picnic Basket Scoop PD1, PD4, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, CA1, CA2, SK1, AL1, AL3, MK1, MK2, MK3	Peek at the Picnic Food SE1, SE4, PD4, SK1, LD1, LD2, AL1, AL2
DAY 4	What Will We Take? LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, PD5, PD6, SK1, LR1, MK1, MK2, LR1, AL1, AL2, AL3, CA4, SS1, SS3	Playing with Blocks LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, LR1, LR2, SK1, SK2, CA3, AL1, AL2, PD5	Wash and Dry! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, LR1, LR2, AL1, AL2, PD5, SK1, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SS1	A Picnic Place LD1, LD2, SK1, MK1, CA3, SE1, SE4, PD5
DAY 5	Get It Up! AL1, AL2, AL3, PD3, PD4, PD5, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SK1, LR1, LR1, CA1, CA2, CA4, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3	Playdough Picnic Foods LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, SK1, CA3, LR1, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, MK1, MK2	Mustard & Ketchup Art LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, MK1, MK2, MK3, PD5, SK1, SK2, CA3, LR1, AL1, AL2, AL3, LK4	Learning about Picnic LD1, LD2, PD5, SK1, SE1, SE4, AL1
DAY 6	Finish and Pack! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, PD5, PD6, SK1, LR1, LR1, LD4, SE1, MK1, MK2, MK3, MK4, AL1, AL2, AL3	Clear, Prep, Packem, Eat! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, PD5, PD6, PD5, MK3, MK4, SK1, SK2, LR1, AL1, AL2	Planting Carrot Tops LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, SE1, SE2, SE4, SK1, SK2, SK3, LR1, PD5, PD6, LK2, LK3, LK4, LK5	Yummy Carrots LD1, LD2, SK1, SK2, CA1, SE1, SE4, AL1
DAY 7	Picnic Treats to Eat! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, PD5, PD6, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SK1, LR1, CA1, CA2, CA3, LR1, LK1, LK2, LK3, LK4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4	Making a "sometimes" Treat! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SK1, LR1, LR1, SE4, MK1, MK2, MK3, SK1, SK2, LR1, PD5, PD6, PD5	Sandy Picnic Treats LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, LR1, LR2, SE1, SE2, SE4, MK1, MK2, MK3, SE4, CA4, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, MK3	Sweet & Salty LD1, LD2, SK1, LR1, PD5, SE1, SE4, AL1
DAY 8	Exploring Nature AL1, AL2, AL3, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, LR1, LR1, LR1, SE1, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4	Backyard Campers LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, LR1, LR1, LR1, LR1, LR1, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4	Nature Sensory Box PD5, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, LR1, LR1, LR1, LR1, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, SK1, SK2, SK3	Nature Sensory Box LD1, LD2, PD5, SK1, SK2, SE1, SE4, AL1
DAY 9	What Should We Do Next? AL1, AL2, AL3, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, LR1, LR1, SE1, SE1, LR1, CA1, CA4, PD3, PD4, LD1, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4	My Own Picnic Pole LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, LR1, LR1, CA4, PD5, MK1	Over the Hill! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, AL1, AL2, SK1, LR1, LR1, PD4, MK3	Cool and Wet! LD1, LD2, SE1, SE4, SK1, SK2, PD5
DAY 10	Picnic Day AL1, AL2, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, PD5, SK1, LR1, LR1, LK4, CA3	How Many Picnic? SE1, SE2, SE4, AL1, AL2, AL3, PD5, SK1, MK1, MK2, LR1, LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4	I Can Be a Picnicer! LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, AL3, PD5, SK1, SE1, SE2, SE4	Shag-Long Fun! LD1, LD2, CA1, SE1, SE4
School-Age Experiences				
	Where Would You Go? LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, PD5, LK2, LK3, LK4, LK5, CA3, SK1, SK2, SE1, SE2, SE4, SS1, SS4	Fancy Picnic Cups CA1, AL2, SE1, SE2, SE4, PD2, PD3, PD5, SK1, CA3, LK3, LK4, LK5, LR1, LD2, LD3, LD4	Fresh Veggies & Dip LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, PD2, PD3, SK1, AL1, AL2	
	Healthy Picnic Treats LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE4, SK1, LK2, LK4, LK5, LR1, PD2, PD5, AL1, AL2, SS1	Stick Sculptures LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, AL1, AL2, CA3, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, LR1, LR2, SK1, SK2, SK3, PD5	What Food Is It? LD1, LD2, LD3, LD4, SE1, SE2, SE3, SE4, PD5, LR1, SK1, SK2, AL1, AL2, AL3, SS1, SS2	

Section 4: Philosophy, Research & More



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 appropriate for them.

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. In addition, the Gee Whiz curriculum addresses state and national ECE standards (e.g., Head Start Learning Outcomes Framework). Our curriculum has a comprehensive approach ... addressing 10 key developmental areas. **Please see our website www.geewhizeducation.com for alignment charts that provide details on how the curriculum addresses the standards in your state and/or national standards such as the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.**

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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) – see citation below
- 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>

Bredenkamp, S., & C. Copple, eds. 2009. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*. Third Edition. Washington, DC: NAEYC.



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)[®] 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?



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Section 5: Meeting the Needs of ALL Children & Gee Whiz



**Supporting Cultural Responsiveness,
Linguistic Responsiveness and
Disabilities, Suspected Delays, and
Special Needs**

Cultural Responsiveness & GWE

What is cultural responsiveness? Sounds complicated but it really is not! Cultural responsiveness is basically respect and appreciation for the fact that we are all different, that families are different and cultures are different. This respect and understanding is then reflected in the activities you plan and the approach you take with each child in your group. So, what does that look like and how does the Gee Whiz curriculum help you make sure that your program is culturally responsive? Keep reading!

STEP 1: Watch our recorded webinar, "Exploring Diversity & Gee Whiz"

This webinar is an excellent first step to help you learn more about how you can assure that you are taking the steps you should to make sure that your program is culturally responsive. During this video, you will need to do some self-reflection to become more aware of your own personal biases. Then, you will learn how you can make sure your program is culturally aware and responsive. You can find this webinar in two different places.

Video Gallery on the Gee Whiz Website

<https://geewhizeducation.com/webinar-training/>

Gee Whiz Education Curriculum for FCC Channel on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKiYj0hTLIDxsdcB7Xftd9g/videos>



STEP 2: Gather information about families

It is critical for you to learn as much as you can about the families you serve. There are many ways to achieve this goal. This "info gathering" is not a "one time" event. Instead, you need to continue to gather information for as long as the child is enrolled in your program. There are many ways you can do this! Here are just a few:

- Ask questions when enrolling new families (see page 58) and ask yourself if you know the answers to these questions for children already in your program. If not, it is time to start asking questions!
- Schedule a monthly parent/guardian meeting to discuss all aspects of the child and his/her home life, perceptions about development, etc.
- Invite family members to visit, and participate in, experiences with their children
- Sharing weekly notes with parents/guardians about their children. Our "All About My Week" Reports (see p. 66) were designed with this in mind. If you are a current Gee Whiz subscriber, you also have special access to our "All About My Day" Infant Reports you are welcome to download and use.
- Utilize our "All about My Weekend" Reports to gain insight into how each child's weekend went. This information can definitely help on Monday! (see pgs. 51 & 52)



Cultural Responsiveness & GWE

STEP 3: Incorporate cultural responsiveness into the GWE curriculum

Now that you know what it means to be culturally aware, it is time to make sure you adapt and modify the Gee Whiz curriculum to reflect not only the cultures and beliefs of the families you serve but also each child's strengths, abilities, experiences and interests as they relate to his/her culture. So, how do you do that? Well, the Gee Whiz curriculum gives you guidance but you know your families the best and will need to take the information you gather in STEP 2 and integrate it into your daily plans. Here are a few ideas to help you get started.

EXAMPLE: One of the Gee Whiz units for 2021-2022 is titled, "All About Me." This unit is perfect for making sure that the activities you plan are culturally responsive. For instance, during experiences that relate to families, you would want to make sure you were aware of each child's unique family make-up. You would also want to expose children to the idea that all families are different and they are ALL special. You could also use technology to expose children to families from around the world. The Gee Whiz curriculum details how to do this in the activity plans.

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Make sure the books in your book area reflect a wide variety of families and cultures
- Include clothing and play food in your dramatic play that represents different cultures, particularly those that represent the families in your group
- Invite family members to talk about special celebrations or events their family celebrates
- Have paint in different flesh tones available in your art center at all times
- When discussing professions, invite family members to share what they do with your group
- Keep in mind when celebrating holidays like Father's Day or Mother's Day that some children may not live with their fathers or mothers and adapt accordingly
- Serve foods for meals and snacks that represents the cultures of the families you serve
- Remember that not all children have had the same experiences prior to coming to your program. Keep this in mind as you plan experiences. It is important to know each child's level of background knowledge and then build upon it appropriately.
- Make sure that you reinforce frequently that there are MANY different types of families and ALL are wonderful!



Examples of Questions You May Want to Ask Families

Who lives with your child?

What language does your family speak at home?

What is mealtime like at home? Does everyone eat at the same time or at different times?

What family members that do not live with you play a very important role in your child's life?

Who gives your child a bath? Feeds your child? Takes him/her to doctor appointments?

Who is the person that disciplines your child?

What type of discipline do you feel works best with your child?

What things must your child do in order to require discipline?

When your child is upset, what do you find works best to console him/her?

When does your child normally go to bed?

What times does your child normally wake up?

How much screen time (e.g., TV, computer, video games, tablet) do you think your child gets on an average day?

What celebrations are important to your family?

What foods does your family enjoy eating?

What special foods do you prepare for celebrations or family events?

What types of music does your family enjoy?

What are your hopes and dreams for your child?

What would you say are your child's biggest strengths?

What do you like best about your child?

What values are you trying to instill in your child?

What are you hoping your child will learn while they are in my program?

What skills do you think your child must have before he/she goes to kindergarten?

Would you say that boys and girls are treated the same or differently in your family? If differently, how so?

Is religion important to your family? If so, tell me more about how religion plays a part in your family's life.

Are there any secular celebrations (e.g., Halloween, Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, etc.) that you would prefer your child not participate in?

Todo sobre mi fin de semana



El nombre del niño: _____

Mi fin de semana fue: ocupado relajado emocionante fatigoso otro: _____

Durante el fin de semana, la mayor parte del tiempo estuve:

feliz irritado emocionado triste sueño ocupado otro: _____

Lo más emocionante que me pasó el fin de semana fue:

Durante el fin de semana, me gustaría que supieras que yo:

Todo sobre mi fin de semana



El nombre del niño: _____

Mi fin de semana fue: ocupado relajago emocionante fatigoso otro: _____

Durante el fin de semana, la mayor parte del tiempo estuve:

feliz irritado emocionado triste sueño ocupado otro: _____

Lo más emocionante que me pasó el fin de semana fue:

Durante el fin de semana, me gustaría que supieras que yo:

Linguistic Responsiveness & GWE

What is linguistic responsiveness? Well, we all know that in today's world, many families speak a language other than English in their homes. Linguistic responsiveness refers to the idea that you will want to embrace this fact and incorporate the children's home languages into the experiences you plan for them and the learning environment in your program. It also means that you will need to incorporate strategies to help children who may speak a different language at home learn English in an intentional way. These children are often referred to as Dual Language Learners (DLLs). Remember...these children are not only learning English but they are also learning to talk in their home language as well. This can be very challenging if you do not speak the home language. Here are some ideas on how you can address the needs of DLLs in your program

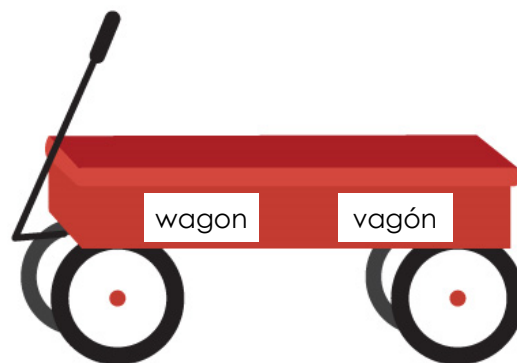
Reflect the languages spoken by the children in your program in your learning environment

HOW?

Label things in the environment in the language spoken by the children in your group (e.g., English/Spanish, English/Arabic)

Use photographs with words to help DLLs begin to connect objects with English words (e.g., labeling where toys belong on a shelf)

Include books in your book area in languages spoken by the children. Ask your local librarian for help finding some.



BUT... What if you do not speak the children's home languages?

It is not at all uncommon for providers to not speak the same language as all of the families they serve. Here are some tips to use if this is the case for you:

- Make Google Translate our friend! It can come in extremely handy when trying to communicate with families and children. If you press the ◀ symbol after translating, Google will even read the translation out loud.
- Learn some basic words in the family's home language (e.g., hello, goodbye, thank you, etc.). Not only does this show respect for the family's home language, it helps you better understand how it feels to be learning a new language ... which is exactly what DLL children are doing!
- Invite family members to come in to teach the children how to sing common songs in their home language. Because the tune is familiar (e.g., Twinkle, Twinkle), learning new words is easier and it is also fun for all the children!
- Learn basic words for communicating with your DLL children such as eat, drink, potty, tissue, hungry, tired, upset, etc. Even knowing a few words will help you communicate better with DLL children. It will also give you the tools you need to then expose these children to the English word that matches their need.



Linguistic Responsiveness & GWE

Here are a few ways that the Gee Whiz curriculum can help you help DLL children learn English while also expanding their home language. These are just a few ideas to get you started.



Model Language

The Gee Whiz curriculum includes tips for modeling language each day. This modeling not only helps English speakers but it also provides an opportunity for DLL children to learn the English language in a meaningful way. Tips are provided to help you incorporate robust language in your conversations with children each day. Make sure you speak slowly and clearly when working with DLLs. Additionally, limit the length of your sentences. Remember... these children are not only trying to learn English, many of them are also still learning their home language as well!

Ask Questions!

The Gee Whiz curriculum includes open-ended questions with each experience. The purpose of these questions is to help promote back and forth conversations between providers and children. Your DLLs can participate at a level that is appropriate for them while they learn a great deal by listening to your conversations with other children. Open-ended questions are extremely powerful because they cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" and not only promote an on-going conversation but creative thinking skills as well.



Put Words to Their Actions

As you conduct experiences with DLLs., you will note that sometimes they may use actions instead of words to share ideas, wants and needs. Take this opportunity to expose them to English by describing their actions using words. This process is also VERY important for all children as they begin to use oral language to communicate. For instance, if you ask a DLL child, "Which color of paint do you want?" and he/she points to the blue paint, then you would want to say, "You pointed to the blue paint. That means that this is the color of paint you want to use." The more you talk to the DLL child, the more language they will absorb during all interactions. If you listen and watch, you will probably find that your older children automatically do this. Do not underestimate the power that children have to learn from one another!



Children with Disabilities/ Suspected Delays and GWE

When you are a child care provider, you are faced with the challenge of addressing the individual needs of the children in your group. This means that you will need to address the needs of children with disabilities, suspected delays or other special needs. In order to adapt and modify experiences for these children, you need to have a basic understanding of what it means for a child to have a disability, suspected delay or other special need. You can find extremely helpful fact sheets about different disabilities under the "Educational Resources/ Resources for Providers" tab on the Gee Whiz website or by following this link: <https://geewhizeducation.com/developmental-disabilities-info/>. Additionally, here is a website that has wonderful detailed information about many different disabilities. Use it as a resource to help you learn more about the children in your care: <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/specific-disabilities/>

Inclusion benefits all children...not just those with disabilities. Research supports this idea as well as the concept that in order for inclusion to be successful, providers need to adapt and modify experiences to address the individual needs of children with disabilities, suspected delay or other special needs. This section will acquaint you with how you can adapt and modify experiences found in the Gee Whiz curriculum when working with children with disabilities, suspected delays or special needs. We also encourage you to reach out to your Quality Specialist or CCRR contact for guidance when working with children with disabilities, suspected delays or special needs. They will know how to help you or where to direct you for further assistance

ADULT/CHILD INTERACTIONS

When working with children with disabilities, suspected delays or special needs, interactions are extremely important. Why are these interactions so important? Because they help enhance each child's social and emotional development. They are also key elements in language and cognitive development as well. So how do you promote and enhance these types of adult/child interactions? Here are a few ideas:

- Engage these children as you would all others in conversations. Just keep in mind, for instance, that they may use different means of sharing thoughts, ideas and needs (e.g., nonverbal) and it may take them longer to respond. Patience and good listening/observing skills are key!
- Maintain eye contact and keep interactions positive. It is crucial for children with disabilities, suspected delays or other special needs to have a strong, positive relationship with you. This will help them to feel secure and comfortable as they push themselves to try new things.
- Listen, watch, learn. Again, in many cases, when working with children with disabilities, suspected delays or other special needs, it is so important to listen and observe to gather information. This information then helps you to plan and adapt experiences.



Children with Disabilities/ Suspected Delays and GWE

CHILD/CHILD INTERACTIONS

Child/Child interactions are just as important as child/adult interactions for children with disabilities, suspected delays or other special needs. You have a key role in enhancing and strengthening these interactions. In order for children to interact with each other, they must have the opportunity to do so. This is where you come in...planning experiences and setting up the environment to encourage child/child interactions. Here are a few ideas of how you can accomplish this goal:

- Utilizing toys and equipment that naturally encourage interactions among children such as water and sand tables
- Group games where everyone can participate
- Music and movement experiences
- Bubbles and balls—always popular
- Helping children who may have trouble initiating social interactions to do so (e.g., asking another child to join in play)
- Keeping interactions as positive as possible!



EXAMINING THE ENVIRONMENT

Another important step to take is examining the learning environment. This includes both indoors and outside. It includes mealtime, routine time (e.g., handwashing), pick up and drop off. Take a minute to think about the children in your group and their individual needs. This is ALL of the children and not just those with disabilities, suspected delays or other special needs. Is your environment responsive to the needs of the children in your group? For instance, is your sink easily accessible to all children? Do you have different types and sizes of paintbrushes in your art center? Do the riding toys work for all of the children in your group or do they need to be adapted? It is very important to take a look around and answer these types of questions. You want the materials the children handle each day to be accessible to all, not just some. The ultimate goal is make sure the environment is engaging for ALL children!

Children with Disabilities/ Suspected Delays and GWE

CURRICULUM ADAPTATIONS

Children are ALL very different ... they have different interests, strengths, likes, dislikes, cultural backgrounds... and the list goes on! Adapting and modifying the curriculum to address the needs of children with disabilities, suspected developmental delays or other special needs is extremely important. But, these adaptations should not be limited to this group of children but instead should apply to all of them. **The Gee Whiz curriculum includes adaptation suggestions within the experiences to help you adjust for different developmental levels and skill sets.** We encourage you to read each experience and all adaptations. Then, think about EACH child in your group. Which version of the experience do you think might be the most developmentally appropriate for each child? You might also read the experience and find that you need to incorporate yet another option. This is exactly what you need to do!

Keeping all this in mind, there are many things you can do to adapt the Gee Whiz curriculum to meet not only the needs of any children in your group with disabilities, suspected developmental delays or other special needs, but all of the children as well.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT

- Make sure all areas are accessible to all children
- Change up materials - add, put away
- Choose materials that encourage children to play together ... even if that is side-by-side (e.g., parallel play) Examples include blocks, water/sand table, dramatic play items, etc.
- Think about what materials might require sharing (e.g., the most popular riding toy)
- Adapt the daily schedule to meet the children's needs (e.g., shorter or longer time for activities)
- Noise matters, too. Some children are very sensitive to loud sounds. If this is the case, keep the volume down when playing music. You can also use folded paper towels and blue painter's tape to cover the place where sound comes out on toys which play music or make sound to dampen volume.
- Does your program have an area where children can go to "decompress?" This might be a Cozy Corner or Book Nook. This type of area is very important for ALL children.

MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

- Make sure all materials you have available to children match their needs (e.g., loop scissors for children with small motor challenges)
- Are toys and materials easily accessible to children? For instance, can a child in a wheelchair get what he/she needs without needing to ask for help?
- Do any of the materials need to be bigger or easier to handle? For instance, when working with Toddlers or preschoolers with fine motor challenges, you will want to have thick crayons and paintbrushes with thick handles that are easier to manipulate.
- Outside matters, too! Are the riding toys and climbing apparatuses appropriate and accessible for ALL of the children in your group?
- Do you need any special equipment? For instance, do you need a special feeding bowl and spoon for a child that may have motor delays? Do you need a table that is high enough for a wheelchair? Does your home need a ramp?



Section 6: Gee Whiz and Your Day



The Gee Whiz Foundation **The Importance of Free & Guided Play** **Gee Whiz & Your Daily Schedule**

Gee Whiz - A Foundation

Just as any house needs a strong foundation, so does an educational program. At Gee Whiz, that is our goal ... to provide you with a curriculum that provides that strong foundation and yet, encourages and invites you to create the "house" upon which that foundation stands. As an educator, it is your role and responsibility to build upon the experiences provided in the Gee Whiz curriculum to make it "your own." Doing this enables you to address the unique interests and needs of the children in your group. This is so important! If you need more guidance on how to individualize the Gee Whiz curriculum, please see Section 2 of this guide (pages 11-22).



Comprehensive Coverage of 10 Developmental Areas & Links to Skills

At Gee Whiz, we work hard to ensure that the experiences we provide in the curriculum incorporate all 10 developmental areas for your group. Further, we link those areas to more specific skills. How? Here's a short explanation:

1. ALL Gee Whiz experiences contain picture codes. These picture codes denote the developmental areas addressed by the experience. For instance, if you see the ♪ symbol, you know that the experience addresses Science Knowledge. If you see the ? symbol, you know it addresses Logic & Reasoning.
2. We then take things a step further and connect those learning areas to specific skills or, as we call them at Gee Whiz, Learning Indicators (see p. 35-36 of this guide for details). In the back of EACH Teaching Guide, you will find a chart. That chart details the specific skills each experience addresses. This makes it easy for you to "connect the dots" while also documenting specific skills each child works on during each Gee Whiz experience.
3. Finally, the Gee Whiz curriculum is NOT designed to be a full day curriculum or an "end all." As you will see in the next few pages, it is designed to incorporate just a part of your day. Children need time for free play (both inside & out) as well as book time, nap time, meals and other routines every day.

The Importance of Play

Play. It must be a part of your daily routine every single day. Not only that, children need free play time both inside and out. Free play is a time when children make choices, think “outside the box,” engage with other children and so much more. Free play helps children build skills in many areas AND is an excellent time for you to observe and record anecdotal notes. (For more information on this topic, please see pages 14-17 of this guide). Recent research supports the idea that both free play and guided play are important elements in any early childhood program. Do you know the difference?

Free play is...

- Fun! Children love to play and it brings them joy
- Happens without any adult intervention
- All about the process. The end result often times does not matter.
- Spontaneous
- Engaging ... on many levels (physical, emotional, social, intellectual)

EXAMPLE: A child is playing on the slide and exclaims, “I am Super Kid and I am going to save the dog that is caught in the fence.” (Of course, there is not a dog caught in the fence... LOL).

Here is a great article about free play. We encourage you to read it: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/18/06/summertime-playtime>



Guided play is...

- Setting up the environment by providing materials children can use during free play that reinforce the curriculum
- Engaging with children by asking open-ended questions as they play
- Commenting on children’s discoveries as they play
- Scaffolding children’s learning by encouraging further exploration
- Sometimes, joining in as a co-player with the child directing you!

EXAMPLE: Adding plastic dinosaurs to the block area during a unit on dinosaurs.

Here is a great paper explains the importance of guided play. We encourage you take time to read it: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2017/case-brain-science-guided-play>

Guided Play & Gee Whiz

Recently, more and more research is pointing to the positive impact guided play can have on young children (see article noted on p. 60). Guided play is written into the Gee Whiz curriculum. While we cannot “plan” free play time, we can give you tools to help you make the most of guided play experiences. Here are a few ways the Gee Whiz curriculum achieves this goal.



Add & Enhance:

This component is included with each Gee Whiz unit. It contains suggested materials to add to your learning areas/centers (both inside and out) that reinforce the current unit. Use this as a tool to set up the environment for guided play. This list is merely a starting point. Please add other materials that reinforce the unit that you believe your children would enjoy using. Try to add some to each of the areas if at all possible.

Open-Ended Questions - Built Right In

At Gee Whiz, we believe that asking open-ended questions as children engage in both adult-directed and child-directed experiences is extremely important. You will find suggested open-ended questions to ask with each Gee Whiz experience (except those for infants). Asking these questions provides you with the opportunity to also scaffold the children’s learning and build upon their interests.

Experiences, Experiences, Experiences:

Many of the Gee Whiz experiences are designed to be child-directed. Your role (as in guided play) is to set up the environment by providing materials from which children can choose. For instance, we might suggest painting with circular objects including jar lids, plastic cups, small plastic bowls, plastic water bottles, etc. In this example, you would set up the art area with these materials as well as paint-soaked sponges or paint in shallow dishes. The children would then decide how to use these materials. As you observe, you would ask open-ended questions and also capture upon this opportunity to talk about the circle shape with those children who are ready. You will find these types of experiences throughout the Gee Whiz curriculum.

Establishing a Daily Schedule

Children thrive on routines. Establishing a daily schedule is extremely important for many reasons. First, it helps children learn to anticipate, "what comes next." Having a routine provides the consistency that young children need. Second, it provides you with the opportunity to balance your day. Finally, establishing a daily schedule is important because it helps you achieve the goal of addressing all areas of development.

One the next two pages, you will find two daily schedules. One is a sample of what your schedule might look like (including the use of the Gee Whiz curriculum) and the other is a blank schedule that you can print out and complete based on your own individual needs.

When planning your daily schedule, keep these things in mind:

- Include a balance of active & quiet time experiences
- Include free play time - both inside and outside. Remember...free play is exactly that...free! No planning required!
- Make sure you build in time for routines such as toileting, handwashing, napping, eating, clean up, etc. All of these activities take time!
- Keep arrival and departure times flexible and open-ended. Children will be arriving and departing a different times.
- Be flexible! Some days your day will not go as planned and that is OK. Also, if the children get very involved in an experience, give them time and adjust accordingly for the rest of the day.
- If you have school-age children, you will need to add in time for bus stop pick-up/ drop off + experiences for them as well.



Sample Daily Schedule

Here is an example of a daily schedule that might work for your family child care program if you've chosen to use Gee Whiz as your curriculum. It is very important to keep the needs of your group in mind when planning your daily schedule. Different ages have different needs. Schedules are important because young children find comfort in knowing, "what comes next." A good schedule also includes time for caring for basic needs such as toileting, handwashing, eating and rest. There should also be a balance between active and quiet experiences, as well as indoor and outdoor play (both free and guided).

6:30 - 7:30 Arrival/Self-Directed Free Play

7:30 - 7:45 Clean-up/Handwashing

7:45 - 8:15 Breakfast

8:15 - 8:30 Handwashing/Toileting/Diapering

8:30 - 9:00 Gee Whiz Exploring Together Experience *(include infants if they are awake)*

9:00 - 9:45 Gee Whiz Small Group Activities + Free Choice Play

9:45 - 10:00 Cleanup/Handwashing

10:00 - 10:15 Snack

10:15 - 11:15 Outdoor Free Play

11:15 - 11:30 Diapering/Toileting/Handwashing

11:30 - 11:45 Story Time - Read to the children every day!

11:45 - 12:00 Handwashing/ Get Ready for Lunch

12:00 - 12:30 Lunch (Don't forget to sit and talk with the children!)

12:30 - 12:45 Diapering/Toileting/Handwashing/Brush Teeth 🦷

12:45 - 2:45 Nap Time

2:45 - 3:00 Wake up/Diapering/Toileting/Handwashing

3:00 - 3:30 Snack

3:30 - 4:30 Indoor Free Play and/or Outdoor Free Play *(You could also finish any Gee Whiz experiences you did not get done in the morning and/or repeat those children enjoyed so they can extend their learning)*

4:30 - 4:45 Toileting/Diapering/Handwashing

4:45 - 5:00 Story Time - Read, Read, Read!

5:00 - 6:30 Pick-Up - Free Play until Parents/Caregivers Arrive



Our Daily Schedule

Time	Activity



Section 7: 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 that in mind, using the program is truly a three-step process. **IMPORTANT! Each Gee Whiz unit is only available on our website for 45 days. As soon as each unit is posted, please download and save all program files to your computer or tablet. Additionally, save a backup copy of all files to a flash drive, external hard drive or the cloud.**

Step 1 - Get Ready!

Start by browsing through ALL the materials for each unit. This will give you a good overview.

- Look over the Materials List. Do you have everything you need? Start prepping any materials that require advanced preparation. These will be denoted in RED.
- 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 topic lend itself to any field trips or visitors? Start planning those activities now.
- Review the "Add & Enhance" list (see p. 64) for each unit and start gathering materials that enhance the unit. This is an excellent way to prep the learning environment!

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. Most of 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 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. **Keep in mind that these lesson plans are just a starting point ... a foundation. You will need to add your own activities and build upon what we provide to meet the unique needs of the children in your group.**

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)
- **IMPORTANT!** Learning Indicator Chart - This chart shows you at a glance all of the Learning Indicators (skills) addressed by each Gee Whiz experience included in the Teaching Guide (see p. 37)
- Book List, Songs, Rhymes, Additional Teaching Materials, Patterns, etc.

See lesson plans details on pages 68-69.



Lesson Plan Sample

The first page of each daily lesson includes the following:

DAY 2

Unit: Balls, Blankets & Boxes
 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

Teaching children to push in their chairs after eating is a simple way for them to practice responsibility.

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.

This symbol indicates the activity addresses character education.

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

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

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

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.

Lesson Plan Sample

The second page of each daily lesson includes the following:

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

When needed, experiences are "leveled" to help you meet the needs of children with different skill levels and/or special needs. The "ages" listed are developmental levels and NOT chronological ages.

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!

Packing and Shipping

(Toddlers—4 years, 🗨️ 😊 ❤️ ✂️ 📦 ♀️ 🧑)

Materials:

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

- 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.

DAY 2 - Center/Small Group Activities

Questions to Spur Thinking

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

Banging on Boxes

(Toddlers—4 years, 🌞 🗨️ ❤️ 🎵 ? ♀️ 😊)

Materials:

- Assorted boxes
- Plastic or wooden cooking spoons

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

Your Own Activities

Pop!

(Infants, 🗨️ ♀️ 🧑 📦 🗨️ ❤️)

Materials:

- Box and plush animal

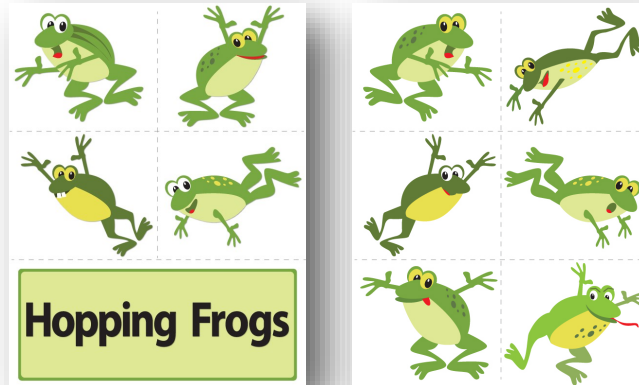
- Reciting rhymes is a wonderful way of exposing infants to new language and vocabulary. Adding action makes the rhyme more engaging and also challenges the infant to use his/her senses.
- Have the infant sit beside you (if he/she is able to do so) or hold him/her in your lap. Put the box in front of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

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

Curriculum Components

Story Props

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



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.

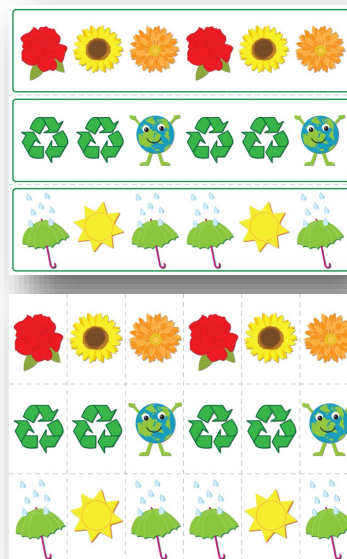


* Please note...the examples pictured on the following pages are from past Gee Whiz units. The ones for this coming year are currently in production.

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.

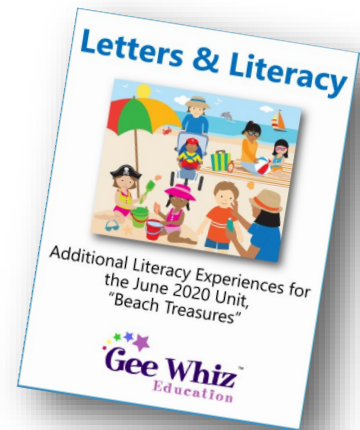
Preparation directions are normally found in the Teaching Guide. While the guide also gives ideas on when to use the Teaching Tool, feel free to utilize it in other ways as well. Our goal is to provide you with a tool that is both educational and flexible!



Curriculum Components

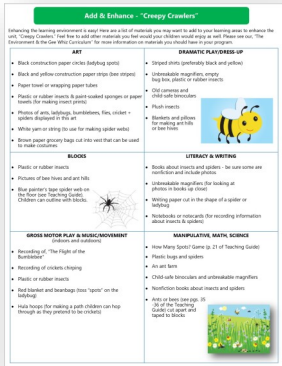
Letters & Literacy Experiences

This component was just added to help you expose children who are developmentally ready to letter names and letter sounds. The experiences included in this booklet integrate with the activities in the Teaching Guide to make this process meaningful to children. We also include a letter to parents/guardians explaining how the Gee Whiz curriculum exposes children who are ready to these early literacy concepts. You can find that document by following this link: <https://geewhizeducation.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/parentflyerliteracy2019-1.pdf>



Add & Enhance

This component is designed to help you enhance the learning environment for each unit and to encourage free play and exploration ... both inside and out. Included are suggested materials to add to centers that integrate with the unit. There is one Add & Enhance included for each teaching unit. We've added a helpful tip sheet with this document to help you learn more about using it in your program as you introduce each unit. We also have a guide, "The Learning Environment & Gee Whiz" included on our website to help you address many of the areas commonly evaluated on Environmental Rating Scales. Here is the link to the page on our website where you will find this document: <https://geewhizeducation.com/learning-environment/>



Materials List

Each Gee Whiz unit comes with a helpful Materials List so you can gather the materials you need in a snap! Materials listed in **red** may just take a little more time to collect or prepare. On the last page, in yellow boxes, are specific materials you will want to be sure to locate well ahead of time and/or purchase (e.g., food for cooking experiences). There is also a yellow box that contains items parents/guardians need to send in OR can help you gather.

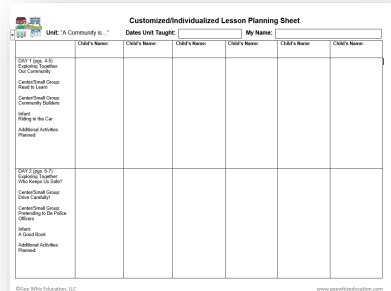
Materials List - "A Kaleidoscope of Colors" Unit				
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
<p>Exploring Together: Let's Meet Ally the Artist (p. 4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ally the Artist puppet, prepared (see p. 30) <p>Center/Small Group: Creating with Colors (p. 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assorted color of paint Ally the Artist puppet Foam painters (if available) Large sheets of white paper <p>Center/Small Group: All About the Color Train (p. 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Color Train Teaching Tool (see p. 32 for prep directions) Old magazines, sale flyers, etc. Tape, scissors <p>Infants: Crawling on Colors (p. 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorful beach towel or blanket 	<p>Exploring Together: Red, Yellow & Blue Fun (p. 9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red, yellow & blue sheets of construction paper taped to the floor (plenty, use blue painter's tape) Ally the Artist puppet <p>Center/Small Group: Primary Color Collage (p. 7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red, yellow and blue construction paper as well as other art/collage materials in these colors Large sheets of white paper OR large white paper plates Gluesticks OR glue in shallow dishes & odd paintbrushes Red, yellow & blue crayons/markers <p>Center/Small Group: Toy Sorting Together (p. 7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ally the Artist puppet Red, yellow and blue construction paper (1 sheet each) <p>Infants: Mushing Colors (p. 7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Squishy paint bags (see p. 7 for directions) 	<p>Exploring Together: Creating New Colors (p. 8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red, yellow and blue paint 3 zipper-top sandwich bags Ally the Artist puppet Spoon <p>Center/Small Group: Colorful Water Surprise (p. 9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water table or container of water Red, yellow and/or blue washable paint Plastic spoons, bowls, whisks, strainers, etc. <p>Center/Small Group: Mix It to Make It (p. 9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red, yellow and blue fingerpaint Spoons Fingerpaint paper Sponge & water <p>Infants: Press 'N' Pound (p. 9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red & yellow washable paint OR yellow & blue washable paint Large sheet of white paper 	<p>Exploring Together: Beautiful Black & Wonderful White (p. 10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ally the Artist puppet White crayons Black watercolor paint (or thinned black paint) Paintbrush for yourself and each child White paper <p>Center/Small Group: Light and Dark Art (p. 11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponge pieces clipped in clothespins Black & white paint in shallow dishes White paper <p>Center/Small Group: A Shadow is Black (p. 11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bright light source that can be used to make shadows (e.g., bright flashlight) White bed sheet (or blanket) OR access to a large white space on a wall <p>Infants: Black & White Dot Art (p. 11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black construction paper White paint in a shallow dish Cotton ball (or large pom-pom) clipping in a clothespin 	<p>Exploring Together: An Outdoor Color Hunt (p. 12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> White posterboard or piece of white paper (sturdy) Paper grocery bag, basket or cardboard box Ally the Artist puppet <p>Center/Small Group: Creating with Natural Colors (p. 13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small paper plates Playdough (to use for making sculptures) <p>Center/Small Group: What Colors Do You See? (p. 13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature items to add to the water table (see p. 13) Scrub brushes Unbreakable magnifiers Water table or container of water, paper towels <p>Infants: Nature Stroll (p. 13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None needed

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

Curriculum Components

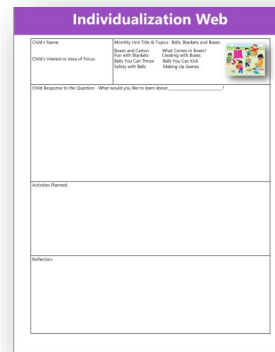
Customized/Individualized Lesson Planning Sheet

This new component is designed to help you customize and individualize the Gee Whiz curriculum to meet the unique needs of the children in your group. Available in both a Word doc (so you can type in the boxes) or PDF (if you prefer to write), this document comes in extremely handy when working with children with disabilities, suspected delays or special needs. A new sheet is included for each unit.



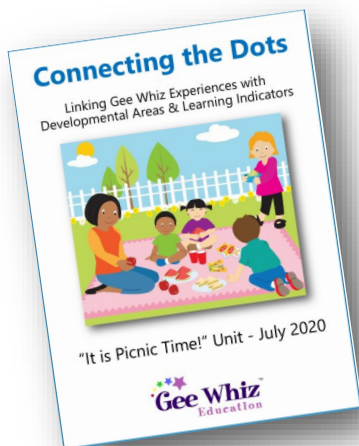
Individualization Web

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 16-21 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.

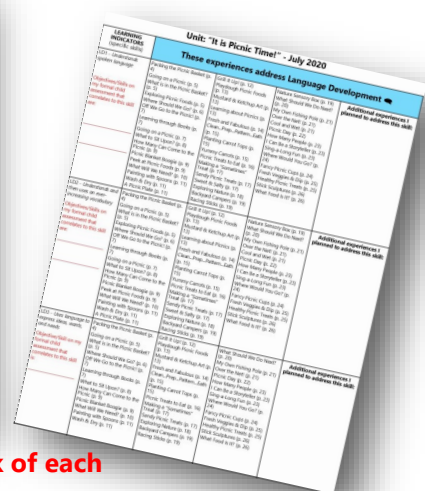


Connecting the Dots

This new component is designed to help you connect specific skills (Learning Indicators) with activities included in the Gee Whiz curriculum. The component also helps you connect Developmental Areas to activities as well. This process also helps you link your formal child assessment tool with Gee Whiz. **You can find a recording of our webinar, "Connecting the Dots - Linking Gee Whiz Experiences with Skills and Assessment" on our website and on our YouTube channel. We highly encourage you to watch it.**



Learning Indicators	Small Group	Small Group	Small Group	Small Group
DAY 1
DAY 2
DAY 3
DAY 4
DAY 5
DAY 6
DAY 7
DAY 8
DAY 9
DAY 10



This chart can also be found in the back of each Teaching Guide.

Curriculum Components

Let's Read Together! Available in English & Spanish

This per child component is designed to help you build literacy skills with all children. Each "Let's Read Together!" booklet is easy to prepare. You just print it out, cut, stack and staple. The short stories or rhymes included in this component are designed to reinforce the unit topic. Each booklet also contains open-ended questions to ask. The main goal of this component is to encourage parents/guardians to read to their children at home. (2 stories per month/1 per unit... available in English & Spanish).

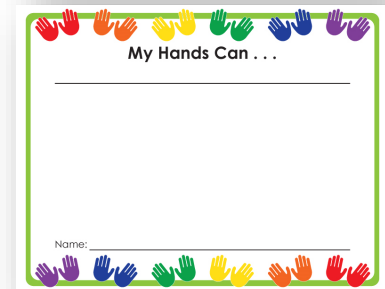
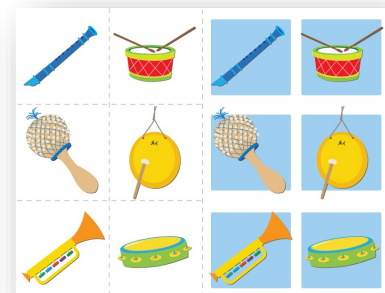


Make It! Sheets

These sheets 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
- Enhance literacy 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. The maximum a provider may print is 12. Detailed directions as well as options for using the sheets can be found in the Teaching Guide. Available in English & Spanish if the sheet contains text.



Curriculum Components

Digital Family Notes

AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH & SPANISH

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.

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.



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Family Letters

AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH & SPANISH

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. This PDF file can be printed or even emailed.



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

AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH & SPANISH

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.

A new design is included with each unit. 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"/> are 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: _____

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"/> are 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: _____

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: <https://geewhizeducation.com/developmental-checklists/>

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.



FREE Tools for Providers

If you go to the Gee Whiz website ... www.geewhizeducation.com, you will find numerous free resources, including our blog. We are constantly posting new resources so be sure to visit often. You will also receive emails when new materials are available so make sure that Gee Whiz is on your "OK" list for emails!

These are just a few of the MANY supplemental materials available to providers on our website. New materials are added to this section quite frequently.

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/Guardians, 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
- Blue painter's tape
- 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
- Clothesbaskets
- 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 tarter

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.

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!)

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.

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.

Notes