

Introduction to Planning for Early Childhood Lessons

Guiding Principles for Building a 30-Minute Early Childhood Lesson Plan

New York State Migrant Education Program (NYS-MEP) Theory of Action

The NYS-MEP believes that providing instruction to students is the core of the program. Yet when we can visualize that instruction as a framework for increasing a student's independence and engaging with students in the context of their identities and life experiences, we can help these preschool students be active participants in their learning.

- **Content Subject and Instruction**
 - Following a two-year period of Item Analysis of the NYS-MEP Early Childhood Academic Tool (ECA), six of the eleven skill areas continue to be challenge areas for students. These six skill areas are targeted in these sample lessons.
 - Emergent Reading, Counting, Shapes, Scissors Skills, Emergent Writing, and using Prepositions
- **Identity Development**
 - Connecting the emergent reading, writing, and math skills to the context of their life experiences and through collaboration with parents and families.
- **Advocacy to Self-Advocacy**
 - Increasing the student's independence through making choices and giving students the time to write, draw, glue, cut, and talk for themselves.

Principles of Trauma Informed Practice

The core of Trauma Informed Practice is giving children back the power they have lost. Creating a safe place for children to make choices and increase their independence.

- **Safety**
 - An overall routine to the session lets a student successfully predict what is next.
 - Includes checking in with the student and how they are feeling as part of the routine
 - Physical activity reduces stress.
- **Trustworthiness and transparency**
 - Follow through on what you tell the student and family what you will do. When you cannot, apologize and explain.
- **Collaboration**
 - Provide opportunity for student/parent feedback. What is working? What is not?
- **Choice and power restoration**

- Look for ways to offer choices to the student and family.

English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners

“ELLs/MLLs can receive home language supports and be provided opportunities to demonstrate skills in their home or primary languages to indicate mastery of the linguistic concepts and skills embedded in the ELA standards.”

(Excerpt from the New York State Next Generation English Language Standards, page 11)

The Hudson Valley RBERN developed guidance for creating a culturally responsive school. The sample lessons created in August 2019 and after, share how the design of the individual lesson utilizes the guidance for inclusive and integrated curriculum resources and instruction.

Inclusive and Integrated Curriculum Resources:

- Representative of diverse students
- Nurture students’ diverse identities
- Include figures from various countries, backgrounds; and who have made important contributions to math, science, history, literature, arts...
- Include multiple cultural perspectives and viewpoints
- Resources available in students’ home languages

Inclusive and Integrated Curriculum Instruction:

- Inquiry-based
- Cooperative and collaborative
- Incorporates students’ interests and life experiences
- Honors and promotes voice and develops agency
- Students learn to use tools to promote their own ideas and engage with others (draw pictures, write, Skype with relatives)

(Excerpt from the Culturally Responsive School Walkthrough Tool developed by the Hudson Valley RBERN, December 2017)

Silent Period

- Preschool students and English Language Learners have silent periods. If a student doesn’t seem to be responding to questions, shift the questions to ask the student to point to something or to pick something up in response to questions.

Time Management

- Preschoolers tend to average five minutes of attention. This varies by student, the day and the activity.
- Thirty minutes is not enough time to focus on all six skills.
 - Emergent Reading is the primary skill targeted every session
 - Use the craft/game segment to focus on another skill
 - Some skills pair well together, providing extra practice without diluting the focus
 - Rotate the skill focus: Last week's craft/game focus skill can be this week's warm up.
- Stay on task, but listen to the preschooler. The time spent listening teaches the child more about being an active learner than any activity an Educator plans.

Advice from Early Educators from the METS

- Build a bag of “go to” manipulatives, coloring, favorite games and books for the day the child completes everything faster than expected or for when time is needed to talk with the parent or caregiver. (Summer garage sales are a good source.)

Preschool Children Learning Through Play

Preschool children learn by watching, listening and doing. Turning activities into games facilitates the learning for preschool children.

- Have fun with the reading! Be dramatic, act it out.
- Make sure preschoolers can see the pictures.
- Connect the print to the spoken words. Follow the words with a finger while reading or place an index card below the line.

Make Changes to fit Individual Students

- Use the child's ECA pre-test to confirm or change the focus skills.
- Preschoolers like repetition and routine, and being able to predict what will happen next. However, preschoolers like fun surprises sprinkled in as well.

Using the Guiding Principles to Plan a 30-Minute Early Childhood Lesson

Early Childhood Educators from around the METS recommended the following goals, thinking and planning for working with preschool students.

| Goals | Approximate Timing | Educator Thinking and Planning |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| Greeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Relationship with Family | 3 minutes | <p><i>Greet family using the parent’s and child’s names</i></p> <p><i>Use an Ice Breaker question</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How is your day going?</i> If child attends a program, you can ask, “<i>How is school? What are you learning about this week?</i>” |
| Warm up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help student make connections to previous lessons Get parents involved Opportunity to give student a choice Game/song/activity to review/practice skills from previous sessions. (check the review skill(s) for today) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prepositions <input type="checkbox"/> Emergent Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Counting <input type="checkbox"/> Shapes | 5 minutes | <p><i>Play a game, do a puzzle, sing a song from a previous lesson</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select something the child enjoyed Select something you are excited about With repetition, the game, puzzle, or song is completed faster, so more can be added in. <p>An activity like a game, puzzle, and singing can help parents to participate.</p> <p><i>Connection to story from the previous lesson: “Last week we read about _____ and today we are going to read about _____.”</i></p> |
| Emergent Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan comprehension questions: (check the one(s) for today’s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Point to nouns when asked <input type="checkbox"/> Names nouns pointed to | Introduction: 3 minutes | <p><i>Introduce story</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand to student to look through Introduce parts of the book (title, author, illustrator) or Building Background Knowledge related to meaningful |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Names action in picture <input type="checkbox"/> Retell: Sequence <input type="checkbox"/> Retell: Characters names <input type="checkbox"/> Retell: What happened <input type="checkbox"/> Retell: What did you think about this story? | <p>Reading and questions: 5 minutes</p> | <p>vocabulary in the story (objects; English-home language words)</p> <p>Read through the story for enjoyment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read with expression and drama. Hold the book so the student can see the pictures. <p>Read again with to build emergent comprehension skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This time stop to ask questions. Start with a type of question the student answered easily during the ECA pre-test. • As sessions progress, add on the next type of question. • Always include questions the student is confident at answering as increasing the student’s capacity with the questions that challenge the student. |
| <p>Follow up Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft or game – this uses the skill in real life • Connect to the Story – helps a student connect stories to real life • Include opportunity to make choice • Target skill (check the target(s) for today): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prepositions <input type="checkbox"/> Emergent Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Counting <input type="checkbox"/> Shapes | <p>5-8 minutes</p> | <p>Craft Connected to the Story and a Focus Skill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The craft might be about a character or theme in the story or it might involve retelling the story in some way. For example, a story about dogs and the skill of counting. Have pictures of dogs (from the internet) for the child to cut out and count. Glue to paper and write numbers to read and reread. (<i>1 dog. 2 dogs. 3 dogs.</i>) The sentence complexity can increase as you get to know the student. • Other skills used: scissors skills, emergent writing - always ask the student attempt to copy or write their name. <p>Game Connected to the Story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act out the story as retelling sequence • Game for a story about dogs: Have two sets of (5) dog pictures to play a memory game with. Each player counts their cards, play again, and count again. • Game for story about rabbits: HOP to match the number of pips on a die or to match a number card. |
| <p>Closing (or time to talk with parent)</p> | <p>Closing - 5 minutes</p> | <p>Talk with Parent</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>(checking that you have all your supplies helps you, and helps the student)</p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child can play with own toys or pull out a favorite activity the child can play on own: blocks, coloring, activity toy <p>Closing <i>Pack up, counting your supplies and engaging the child to help:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My box of crayons is missing the red one. Can you help me find it?</i> • <i>Stack the green blocks. Let's count and make sure we have five.</i> <p><i>Reminder for parent about the date and time of next session</i></p> <p><i>Use names of parent and child when saying good-bye.</i></p> |
|--|--|---|

Why do the sample lessons aim for thirty minutes?

- This gives new Educators the basic core to start with. It might take a new Educator longer than 30 minutes, until a routine is established
- Educators with longer sessions can add additional activities based on student needs or use more time sharing activities with parents
- Some Educators currently have thirty minutes to meet with their preschoolers and others might need to reduce to thirty minutes

Template for a 30-Minute Early Childhood Lesson

| Goals | Approx. Time | Date: |
|--|------------------------|--|
| Greeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Relationship with Family | 3 min | Greet family using the parent's and child's names |
| Warm up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection to previous session Get parents involved Today's target skill(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Preposition(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Counting <input type="checkbox"/> Emergent Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Shapes <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors Skills | 5 min | Game/song/activity to review or practice: |
| Emergent Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today's target comprehension question(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Points to nouns <input type="checkbox"/> Names nouns <input type="checkbox"/> Points to action <input type="checkbox"/> Names action <input type="checkbox"/> Retell-What did you think? <input type="checkbox"/> Retell-What happened? | Intro: 3 min | Story: |
| | Read and Ask: 5 min | Introduce Story: |
| | | 1st-Read to Enjoy 2nd-Read and ask Comprehension Questions |
| Follow up Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect to the story Include opportunity to make choices Today's target skill(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prepositions <input type="checkbox"/> Counting <input type="checkbox"/> Emergent Writing <input type="checkbox"/> Shapes <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors Skills | 5-8 min | Materials: |
| | | Activity: |
| Closing/Talk with parent before Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage child in cleanup process Use parent/child names when saying good-bye | 5 min | (Parent Topic as needed) |
| | | Reminder for parent about the date and time of next session |