

About the Curriculum

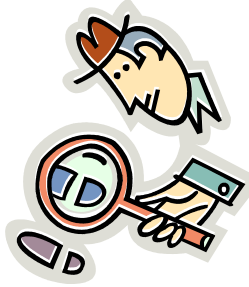
The Teacher's Tool for School Age Care® was created to meet the ever changing needs of child care providers who work with school age children. Because school age child care involves a variety of settings such as before school and/or after school care in addition to full day care during the summer months and other holidays, this curriculum focuses on monthly units of study or, "Monthly Investigations", that can be explored as time allows.

This curriculum is designed to serve as a spring board for lesson planning, and can be used by experienced and new teachers alike. Just as in its predecessor for preschool teachers, the school age care curriculum offers a menu style format for teachers. This allows teachers to go to a section of their lesson plan and then get ideas for that section from the section's menu of items listed for that month. Additional blank menu pages are available for teachers to add their own ideas and activities to the curriculum, developing their own, personal portfolio approach to lesson planning. Each classroom or teacher would ideally have a copy of the curriculum to insure this portfolio approach can best be utilized.

Throughout the curriculum, there will be references to some activities that are geared towards older school agers, and others that work well with the younger children in the class. However, most activities are designed to work with the multiage groupings that are normally found in school age classrooms.

Also found throughout the curriculum are references to, "Investigative Reports". These are usually found in the Newsroom, or Group Time section of the curriculum. These are an indicator to teachers that they'll need to find internet articles and/or books about the subject of the reports for the children to use as they investigate the topics of study that month. Since the curriculum has an investigative/research theme, children are often challenged to write articles and produce a center or program newsletter to publish their articles in. It was important that this emphasis on literacy activities be a part of the Teacher's Tool for School Age Care® to foster a love of learning and instill a sense of accomplishment in the children as they investigate the wide variety of topics covered in the curriculum.

Perhaps the greatest benefits of this new curriculum are the time saved in searching through multiple resources for ideas throughout the year, the ability to organize and collect information in a convenient binder, and the curriculum's user friendly design.



How To Use the Curriculum

Monthly Investigations: The curriculum is divided into 12 units of study, otherwise known as, “Monthly Investigations”. The children will investigate each of the units of study from the perspective of a detective, or investigative reporter. Regardless of what month you begin using the curriculum, it is important to refer to the September Monthly Investigations to help the children develop the mindset of how they are to become investigators and partners in their quest for knowledge. There are several books referred to in the Library Language Station of the September section that will help you teach the children to take on this role.

Learning Stations for Investigations: Commonly referred to as learning centers, we’ve decided to call them Learning Stations for Investigations. School age children prefer to explore these stations instead of “Learning Centers” which they associate with preschool classrooms.

Lesson Plans: To assist you in planning, enrichment activities for each learning station are listed on separate pages in a menu style format for your convenience. Scan the activities to decide which best suit the developmental needs of the children in your class at the time. Simply, “go to the menu” and select the activities you need for your lesson plans. For instance, if you need a science activity, turn to the unit’s science section and select one or two of the activities listed there and transfer them to your lesson plan. It’s just that easy!

The Parent Tool: A “Parent Tool” is included to enable you to communicate the plans you have for the class for the upcoming month. It is best to plan your lessons for the month before filling in the Parent Tool information areas. You are provided space to send gentle reminders regarding health and safety issues, donations needed for classroom activities, information related to the unit of study, and other important information such as upcoming field trips and special guests. You’ll be thrilled with the response you receive from parents by simply using this wonderful communication tool!

The Newsroom: Group Time now has a new name...the Newsroom. There are a number of activities provided each month that can help you introduce the various topics related to the month’s themes during group time with the children. You will play the role of “Chief” of the newsroom, and give your “reporters” assignments related to the group time discussions, sometimes asking them to provide a written report or article for the center newsletter.

CREATIVE ART AND WRITING STATIONS: ENRICHMENT IDEAS

As you will note, there is no formal “ART” station in the curriculum. There is a CRAFTS STATION where teacher directed activities are listed, but they aren’t truly creative art. In May, there are several creative, child directed activities listed due to the artistic theme for that particular month, but otherwise, only teacher directed crafts are listed. Therefore, we are including below some samples of what you might put in your art area for child directed, true creative art.

True creative art is not a planned “project”, designed by the teacher. True creative art is a result of allowing the children to choose from a variety of art mediums to create their masterpieces. Refer to the list below for enrichment ideas for your art area. These items are great, but not all inclusive enrichment ideas. Add other ideas throughout the year to keep the children interested and involved. Be sure to include enrichments from nature as the seasons change!

Creative Art Ideas for Enrichments: Old Christmas cards, hay, scissors, coffee filters, seeds, butcher paper, Styrofoam, bottle tops, various types, sizes and weights of paper, glitter, hole punch, confetti, rulers, crayons, pencils, easels, feathers, spools, wrapping paper, staplers, colored pencils, paint pots and brushes, wall paper, markers, foil, newsprint, tape, stencils, craft sticks, containers with lids, paste, chalk, ribbons, items from nature, pumpkin seeds, magazines, paper cups, water colors, finger paints, brown bags, paper plates, fabric scraps, and yarn.

Library/Language Writing Center Ideas for Enrichments: Various types and weights of paper, pencils, ink pads and stamps, newspapers, picture paper, colored pencils, charcoal pencils, pencil sharpener, steno pads, magazines, sentence strips, magnetic letters, menus, and markers.

Music, Movement, and Gross Motor Station: Each month, there will be suggestions for musical activities, exercises for the children, and sometimes even dance moves! Be sure to look for dance videos that are appropriate for the children when you investigate the oldies, music and dances of the 70’s as well!

Blocks Station: The blocks station fosters not only fine motor development, but also dramatic play. When you add vehicles, figures, animals, and perhaps paper dolls to this station, you are providing tools for the children to enhance their play. There are several samples of items to copy and laminate and attach to the blocks to enrich this station throughout the year.

Dramatic Play Station: Dramatic Play is the thing! Yes, this curriculum is theme based, and the units of study reflect those themes throughout the various dramatic play enrichment ideas. Be prepared to transform not only your dramatic play station, but also to transform your entire classroom at times to reflect your themes!

Library Language Station: This station is a great support for preparing the children for utilizing the various enrichments you place in the learning stations. For instance, by introducing the children to books and articles about submarines, you are preparing the children for a higher level of dramatic play when you recreate a submarine for them in the dramatic play area, and you give them a reference point for drawings and paintings they will do of submarines in the Crafts Station or art area.

Please realize that although we have done everything we can to research books for you to use with the curriculum, some of those chosen for the sections regarding muscle cars and the clothing worn in the 70's might need to be reviewed before making them available to the children to insure that all photos and language are suitable for the ages in your care. These books were important to use in order to give the children a glimpse into the past, and there were simply no books found that were written for children about the topics we chose to cover.

During the summer camp months, we included most of the summer activities from the preschool version of the curriculum in order to provide consistency for programs when planning and budgeting. However, we felt it was really important to provide new book ideas for you to utilize, so books for older children were added to these months.

Math and Reasoning Station: Making math fun and interesting can often be a challenge for most of us, but we've made every effort to weave math into other stations' activities so that it takes on more of the role of documentation and provides the children opportunities to use their reasoning skills in making predictions and proposing theories as they become involved in their investigations.

Science and Nature Station: Lots and lots of cooking and meal preparation activities are provided in the science and nature station as well as activities involving observing animals and weather conditions.

Developmentally Speaking...

One of the greatest challenges in working with school age children in a child care setting is trying to meet the ever changing interests of the wide variety of age groups served within the classroom. Another great challenge is to develop a balanced schedule that allows the children the opportunity to relax after a long day of school in a formal setting while still providing a challenging learning environment for them after school.

For these reasons, we have developed two sample daily schedules as a reference for you. These can be modified to meet the needs of your program as a whole, and playground times can be modified as other classrooms will need to schedule their outdoor play as well. We hope these samples help you to get started on providing a healthy balance of quiet and active program activities that are developmentally appropriate for the age groups you serve!

Daily Schedule for School Aged: Half Day

- 4:00 p.m. Children arrive on bus, transition to playground
- 4:30 p.m. Transition to snack
- 4:45 p.m. Transition to free choice learning stations/homework
- 5:45 p.m. Children remaining transition to dinner/or center closes

Daily Schedule for School Aged: Full Day

- 7:00 a.m. Free Choice Activities in Learning Stations
- 8:45 a.m. Transition to breakfast
- 9:15 a.m. Newsroom/Large Group
- 9:30 a.m. Playground/Gross Motor Activities
- 10:00 a.m. Free Choice in learning stations, Small Groups
- 11:45 a.m. Transition to Lunch
- 12:30 p.m. Free Choice in quiet areas of learning stations during nap. Up to 1 hour of playground time weather permitting. (For programs with other age groups enrolled.)
- 2:30 p.m. Transition to snack
- 3:00 p.m. Free Choice in all learning stations
- 4:00 p.m. Playground
- 4:30 p.m. Free Choice in all learning stations
- 5:30 p.m. Center Closes