

Suggested Daily Activities

Scheduled daily activities must promote:

Social growth:

- Play and interaction with adults and other children, and
- Development of communication skills.

Intellectual growth:

- Safe exploration of the child's environment,
- Experimentation with objects to challenge the child's curiosity, and
- Use of equipment and materials that stimulate imagination, encourage problem-solving abilities, and increase competence.

Emotional growth through acts and attitudes on the part of center staff members that build trust between children and adults, and build self-esteem in children. Important elements of trust-building and self-esteem development include:

- The manner in which separation from the child's parent is achieved,
- Satisfaction of the child's need for dependence on, and physical closeness to an adult,
- Satisfaction of the child's need for independence, and
- Consistency in guiding the child's behavior without physical punishment, ridicule, harsh language or tone of voice, sarcasm, humiliation, or other forms of cruelty.

Physical growth:

- Promotion of good nutrition and health-consciousness, and
- Activities that allow the child to practice developmental skills without harm to self or others. Examples of these activities include running, climbing, lifting, throwing, pushing, pulling, balancing, and practicing fine motor skills. Physical growth activities also include the development of self-care skills, such as eating, toileting, dressing and undressing.

Activity choice:

- When children play, eat, work, and sleep in groups, opportunities must be provided for privacy and individual pursuits. Activity choices should be available that allow children to play in small groups or by themselves.
- Children should not be forced into regimented activities that deny their individuality. Instead, each child should be exposed to a variety of activities that allows the child to:
 - ♦ Achieve at his or her own pace and level of ability;
 - ♦ Be involved in tasks that are significant to the child;

- ◆ Express feelings for which the child may not yet have a verbal outlet; and
- ◆ Engage in activities that foster independence.

Activity balance: Restful, quiet activities should follow normal vigorous play to prevent physical and mental fatigue brought on by either too much or too little physical activity.

Healthful outdoor exercise: Except in severe or inclement weather or before school, children must be able to play outdoors twice each day in order to:

- Stimulate rapidly growing muscles and practice gross motor skills,
- Have a change of scene that offers a level of self-expression and freedom of action not possible indoors, and
- Develop a stronger and more resilient body to help resist colds and infections.