Developing Curiosity and Creativity in the Early Education Classroom

ACSI Early Education Foundation Statements
Appropriate Activities for Children
Play is a vital part of the young child’s learning experience and allows them to experience God’s world, express themselves, learn to manage relationships, regulate behaviors, and foster imagination. Early educators include a variety of differentiated learning opportunities supporting God’s design for how each child learns. Activities include a balance of teacher-guided instruction and child-initiated exploration. Effective teaching is seen when scaffolding (layered support and instruction) is present, providing repetition of information and experiences for the child.

Find the full document on ACSI’s public website www.acsi.org/earlyeducation

Created in His Image
- “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” Genesis 1:27
- “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” Ephesians 2:10

Curiosity
- Curiosity is a hunger to know and drives interest, excitement and exploration.
- Curiosity changes our brains. Being curious is rewarding to the brain – we learn more when the brain is curious.

Nurture Curiosity
- Curiosity leads to concrete experiences which leads to repetition and mastery of learning.
- Model interest in the world God created
- Encourage children’s natural interests
- Create an interesting environment and allow for discovery
- Stimulate children with open-ended questions

Reflection –
What interests me?

How can I demonstrate curiosity about this interest?

How can I foster curiosity in my classroom?

Creativity
- “Creativity involves thinking as the process and doing as the ability” Kevin Washburn
Nurture Creativity with Open Ended Opportunities

- Provide open ended materials and opportunities.
- Emphasize process rather than product.
- Provide a classroom environment that allows children to explore and play without undue restraints.
- When possible, adapt to children's ideas rather than trying to structure the children's ideas to fit the adult's.
- Accept unusual ideas from children by not displaying or stating judgement of children's different problem solving.
- Use creative problem solving in all parts of the curriculum. Use the problems that naturally occur in everyday life.
- Allow time for children to explore all possibilities, moving from popular to more original ideas.

Example: PA Early Learning Standards for Pre-kindergarten, page 65:
“Creative thinking and expression is an important component of children’s early learning experiences. Children who are given opportunities to develop their imagination and creativity through a variety of media are learning to express their individuality in interests, abilities, and knowledge. When they view others’ work, children are also learning to appreciate and respect differences in culture and viewpoint. Creative expression influences children’s growing competence as creative problem solvers and provides insight about their world around them. Teachers support creative learning by providing concrete, process-oriented play experiences that encourage children to use their imagination and to experiment with new ideas and materials.”

Curiosity and Creativity

- Children are born to be curious
- Provide opportunities
- Nurture problem solving
- Ask open-ended questions
- Make learning fun

Resources:

- The Architecture of Learning; Designing Instruction for the Learning Brain by Kevin Washburn
- Process Art; Learn Through Creation, ACSI Purposeful Design
- ACSI.org / School services / Early Education / Tools / Classroom Posters
- Fostering Creativity by Mary Ann Kohl, Early Childhood News
- Tips on Nurturing Your Child’s Curiosity, Zero to Three
- ACSI Principles and Practices of Christian Early Education, Purposeful Design
- PA Early Learning Standards

Jeannie_forrest@acsi.org