Nurturing the Inquisitive Young Mind: Developing Curiosity and Creativity in the Early Education Classroom

1. Young minds flourish in classrooms where children are able to inquire and explore. When early educators build upon ______________ for children’s natural tendency toward curiosity and creativity they nurture inquisitiveness.

2. Young children learn ______________ than older students and need an environment where their natural curiosity and creativity can be acknowledged and fostered.

3. Learning Objectives: Investigate ➔ Examine ➔ Develop

4. 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

5. Created in His Image

- “God ______________ man in His own image, in the image of God He ______________ him; male and female He ______________ them” Genesis 1:27

- “For we are His ______________, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” Ephesians 2:10

6. Reflection Activity 1

Working in small groups, find a verse to support God’s creativity in the following areas:

- Language ______________
- Music ______________
- Colors ______________
- Ideas ______________
• Personalities
• Ethnicity

7. Curiosity

• Curiosity is a ________________ to know and drives interest, excitement and exploration.
• Curiosity ________________ our brains. Being curious is rewarding to the brain. We learn more when the brain is curious.

8. Nurturing Curiosity

• Curiosity leads to ________________ experiences which leads to repetition and then to satisfaction or mastery of learning.
• Curiosity encourages children’s natural interests
• Curiosity creates an interesting environment allowing for discovery
• Curiosity stimulates children with open-ended questions

9. Reflection Activity 2
Working with another person, share with each other what interests you have outside of work and family and how do you demonstrate curiosity about this interest?

How can I spark curiosity in my classroom?

10. Creativity

• “Creativity involves ___________ as the process and ___________ as the ability”. Kevin Washburn

11. Nurturing Creativity

• Provide ___________ ___________ materials and opportunities
• Emphasize ________________ rather than product.
• Provide a classroom environment that allows children to explore and play without undue restraints.
• When possible, ________________ 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 _____________________ ___________________ in all parts of the curriculum.
  Use the problems that naturally occur in everyday life.
• Allow time for children to ______________ all possibilities, moving from popular to more ______________ ideas.

12. Early Learning - Texas

The arts, play, and imagination link closely to many other skills areas including cognition, motivation, general knowledge, fine motor development, listening, and expression. Studies have shown that the arts contribute to student achievement and success in a number of ways. For example, researchers are exploring the ways that arts contribute to children’s learning and success, including their abilities to focus attention, practice and persist, take pride in what they create, and work with others. By creating opportunities for the arts and pretend play, caregivers strengthen several skill areas.

13. Reflection Activity 3

Open-Ended Questions

One of the goals of process art is to let children draw their own conclusions about what they are creating. Children’s art projects can tell you a lot about them—what they are going through emotionally, their thoughts about life, or where they are developmentally. Use open-ended questions or requests to draw out what children are thinking.

Open-ended questions typically begin with words such as why and how. Also useful are sentences that are not technically questions but that implicitly ask for a response. These sentences often start with phrases such as “Tell me about …” “Wait for a response, and then decide if another question will draw the child out further.

1. “Tell me what materials you would like to use today.”
2. “Tell me about this picture.”
3. “Why did you choose those colors?”
4. “How do you feel using [a flyswatter, a nylon, your fingers] to paint with?”
5. “Tell me about the objects in your picture.”
6. “What else would you like to use in your painting today?”

Practice asking open-ended questions. Have a conversation with a colleague about any subject and only ask open-ended questions. Write down your favorites.
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Materials Needed: