

BUILDING BLOCKS

A Newsletter for Teachers Working with Infant, Toddler and Preschool Educational Equity For All

January 2020

A 4-year-old child's attention span is about 15 minutes according to child development experts. Therefore, 15 minutes is a reasonable duration for circle time at preschool (25-30 minutes is reasonable for kindergarten). However, it's common for teachers to conduct circle times that go on for 45 minutes to an hour.

Why Preschool Circle Time Gets Overused When Small Groups Are Better

Circle Time Has Grown Too Long and Unwieldy

Why are preschool teachers going overboard with circle time activities?

With research to the contrary, why then are preschool teachers doing longer and more frequent circle times you may wonder. Let's look at 5 reasons circle time is being used for all the wrong reasons:

1. Teachers love to be center stage at circle time
2. Circle time is easy-peasy compared to planning small group activities
3. Circle time allows for a higher student-teacher ratio, increasing profits for the owner
4. Circle time costs nothing
5. Parents are impressed by circle time, not play time

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- Keep circle time short
- Use a circle time routine
- Short interesting books and active circle time lessons
- Try reading at different times if it's not working at circle time
- If circle time isn't working, get up and move
- No matter what, keep your cool

You can do this – keep it short, keep it active, and keep it positive! t.ly/oblmr

preschool unit lesson plans



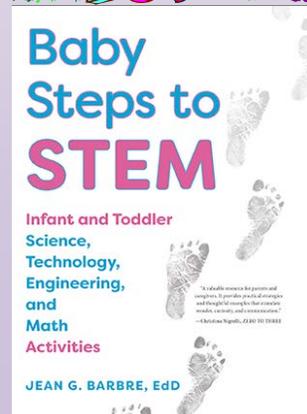
Read, Create, Explore, Discover 24 Interactive thematic lesson plans for young children

Get ready for fun and learning with preschool unit lesson plans for Winter. This thematic unit is packed with literature based activities that are easy to prepare and fun to implement.

- Explore a variety of themed hands-on activities!
- Build vocabulary and early literacy skills with songs and games!
- Get learners ready for school with printable pages!

Easy to follow lesson plans include activity modifications and adaptations to meet the needs of all learners.

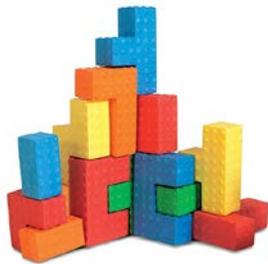
This unit includes activities for: literacy, math, sensory exploration, crafts, science, social studies, gross motor, social and emotional well-being. t.ly/9eV77



Baby Steps to STEM: Infant and Toddler Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Activities

Author: Jean Barbre

FEATURED IDEA OF THE MONTH



Edushape Easy-Grip Soft Foam Sensory Puzzle Blocks

Edushape Soft Foam Puzzle

Blocks engage the child's sense of touch to teach them about shapes, colors, and texture. The differently shaped foam blocks in bright colors are eye-catching and are designed especially for children with special needs. The block puzzle helps improve the child's spatial, logical and reasoning skills.

5 Things Children Do at Preschool That Are a Waste of Time



These five activities are part of a typical preschool schedule, and parents rarely question their legitimacy. Instead, they see them as "real learning" and what's needed to prepare kids for kindergarten. Many child development experts, however, believe they're largely a waste of time and may even be detrimental.

1. *The Calendar*

Children learn math skills such as counting, sequencing, and patterning more effectively with hands-on materials, not calendar time.

2. *Craft Projects*

At an early age, preschool children get the wrong ideas about art, thinking the finished product is more important than the process of getting there. Uniformity gets celebrated above originality.

3. *Teacher-Directed Lessons*

The push to prepare children for kindergarten has led to an increase in teacher-directed lessons.

4. *Workbooks*

Research shows children learn more about letters and numbers by doing hands-on activities, not workbooks.

5. *Letter of the Week*

With the "letter of the week" approach, children have long forgotten A, B, and C by the time they finally reach Z

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WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

t.ly/k2GW9

t.ly/gDPV8

t.ly/lxyRj

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



EARLY EDGE
CALIFORNIA

Professional Development Opportunities for Early Learning Teachers

- English Learners in the TK and Preschool Classroom: Strategies that Work
- Outdoor Classroom Project's annual conference: *"The Foundation of Natural Outdoor Classrooms: Gifts of Respect, Time, and Love"*
- New Online Module from NAEYC: Serious Fun!
- California Department of Education Streaming Video Collection
- Zero to Three Learning Center
- The California Preschool Development Grant (PDG)

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FunShine
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Early Learning Curricula

2019
2020

1 Save one hour of lesson prep time, per day!

2 Aligned to early learning standards

3 Professional support and training

**We Simplify Your Day...
Guaranteed!**

"Absolutely love this curriculum! Meets every need in quality! My child care was rated by Colorado Shines and I got a perfect score with this curriculum. It's every bit of fun for me as it is for my children!"
—Bernice M., CO

Curriculum for Ages 0-5

Access online, in print, or a combination of the two.

<http://online.fliphtml5.com/xmxdz/xbhl/#p=1>