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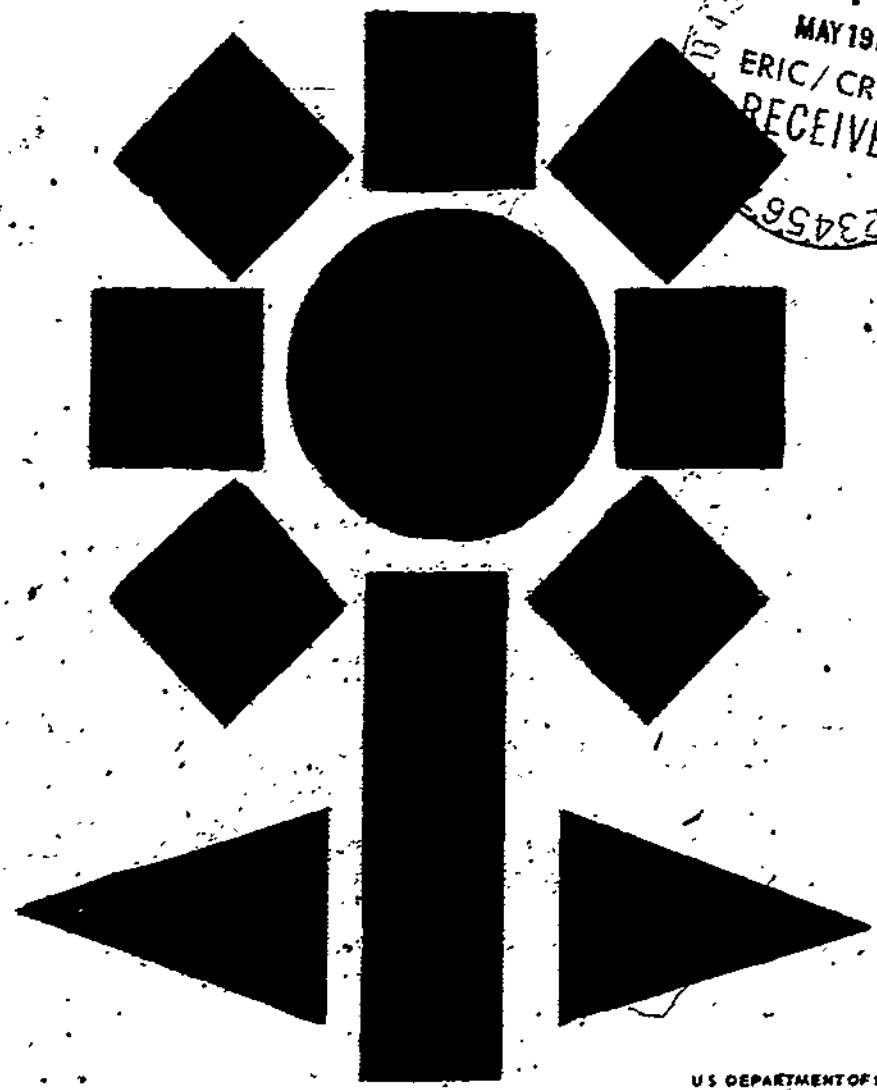
ABSTRACT

Migrant early childhood education programs must be designed to meet the needs of young children whose growth and development are significantly influenced by their parents' employment in agriculture or agri-related industries. Such programs should strive to: foster a sense of trust in people and in the environment; develop a positive, confident, worthwhile self-concept; and provide a variety of rich experiences delighting every sensory modality. In order to effectively accomplish these goals, early childhood programs for infants and preschoolers should have two equally important components--an in-school, all-day preschool program and a parent education program. In developing these programs- consideration should be given to: the type of program, who pays, when to begin, how long to continue, and the effects of the experiences on the child and his family. All programs must then address the concerns related to facilities, staffing, materials, and curriculum objectives. Special concern should be given to the areas of health, nutrition, and a system for tracking the families' movements in the migrant stream by all migrant early childhood education programs. (NQ)

MIGRANT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:



AN OVERVIEW

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MIGRANT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Migrant Early Childhood Education programs must be designed to meet the needs of young children whose growth and development are significantly influenced by the employment of their parents in agriculture or agri-related industries. Such programs must recognize that, while the needs of young migrant children do not differ substantially from those of other populations of pre-schoolers, there are certain aspects of development that are critically influenced by the continuous relocation of the family from one geographical area to another, and by the poverty, or near poverty existence of the family.

These special needs include the unique circumstances surrounding the development of self-image and self-awareness, the development of perceptual-sensory and language skills that will assist in an adequate adjustment in later life, the physical well-being of the child as affected by the nutritional practices experiences in the earliest years of development, and the health of the pre-school migrant child who may not receive adequate medical attention for his specific problems. Conversely, sometimes he receives too much attention in terms of over-innoculation against childhood diseases as he moves from locality to locality.

The migrant infant and pre-schooler usually does not have bed, clothes or toys that belong to him alone. He is not afforded the opportunity to become familiar with a particular environment that can be recognized as home. He is often cared for by a variety of related or unrelated adults, some of whom may be complete strangers. Or he may be left under the supervision of a sibling who, in fact, may not be old enough to fully appreciate the great importance of such responsibility. There tends to be little regularity in the daily routines of sleeping and eating and playing. This discontinuation affects every aspect of the young child's life including when and where and with whom he sleeps, with what, with whom and where he plays; what he eats and the length of interval between feedings. The eating routines of pre-school migrant children affect the child's very existence often causing diarrhea, malnutrition and health problems that continue with the child into adulthood.

> "To my eye migrant children begin a migrant life very, very early. By and large, they are allowed a rather free rein as soon as they can begin to crawl. Even before that they do not usually have cribs, and often enough they lack clothes and usually toys of any sort. Put differently, right off the migrant child learns that he has no particular possessions of his own, no place that is his to use for rest and sleep, no objects that are his to look at and touch and move about and come to recognize as familiar. He does not find out that there is music in the air from mysterious boxes, nor does he wake up to find bears and bunnies at hand to touch and fondle. In short he does not get a sense of *his* space, *his* things, or a rhythm that is *his*. He sleeps with his mother at first, then in a few months with his brothers and sisters. Sometimes he sleeps on the floor, sometimes on the back seat of a car, or on the floor of a truck and sometimes on the ground."[1]

The sense of discontinuance that so drastically affects the development of the young migrant child is further reinforced by the even greater sense of not belonging experienced by his family, especially in user states. The migrant family is usually isolated from the host community by distance, migrant housing being located outside the village on back country roads, and often by cul-

tural differences and language barriers. The family arrives in an unfamiliar village to occupy a previously unknown dwelling for an unspecified amount of time. They work at an occupation that is so affected by the weather and the changing marketing conditions that is is not possible to predict what their income may be for more than a week or two at a time.

Poverty affects the children of migrant families as it does the children of poor families everywhere. They are insufficient amounts of food, inadequate dwellings, clothing that belonged to someone else first, toys with wheels and eyes and arms that are missing. More importantly, it affects the very core of the family's life style causing arguments, resulting in guilt on the part of parents who are unable to adequately provide for the family's basic needs, and who never experience the joy of playing Santa Claus or Easter Rabbit or fulfilling a child's hoped for wish. Further, families living in poverty generally have the least educational and occupational resources to assist them in making the wisest choices for better meeting their needs.

These problems of poverty are complicated and exaggerated by the forced travel of the migrant family.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Group experiences for children under the age of five is an issue that has been of concern to this nation's parents, educators and politicians for over a century.[2] The questions of how much, what kind, when to begin, who pays and the effects of these experiences on the child and family have been addressed and re-addressed.

It will be helpful in developing pre-school programs for migrant populations if the above questions are discussed as they relate specifically to migrant children and families.

What are the Effects of Pre-School Group Experiences

Early child development theory by people such as John Bowlby and Anna Freud postulated that when the child was placed in a child care situation outside of his home at a very early age, the result was detrimental to the intellectual and physical development of the child[3] and sometimes even caused the child's death. However, later studies by Lally,[4] Caldwell,[5] Project Headstart, and others have pointed out that temporary separation of the child from his mother, even in early infancy, is not detrimental to the child's well being if care is taken to provide the child with warm, affectual relationships during the parent's absence. Further, the additional nutritional, medical and educational attention afforded to young migrant children enrolled in pre-school programs can act as buffers against the difficult circumstances affecting the normal development of the migrant pre-schooler.

In terms of the affects of pre-school group experiences on the migrant family, if care is given to incorporate the culture, language and experiences of the family into the program offered to pre-schoolers, if efforts are made to emphasize the contributions and strengths of the parents, the pre-school program can have only positive outcomes for the child and his family.[6]

Further, the pre-school program can offer an opportunity for sensitive and creative planners to initiate parent involvement and adult education programs that will assist parents in understanding the developmental, nutritional and physical needs of their children and means by which they can better provide for those needs. Close cooperation between the parent and the pre-school educator can begin to provide a sense of continuation of experiences in the life of the migrant child.

When Do We Begin and How Long Do We Continue

The issues of when to begin pre-school programs and how long to continue raise several questions on more than one plane. One set of questions focuses around daily and seasonal length of programs. What time should the school day begin? What time should it end? Should programs operate for a few weeks at peak seasons or should they be continuous, offering services as long as children remain in the area? On another plane, the question of when to begin begs an answer related to age groups to be included in pre-school migrant education programs.

In answer to the second concern as to enrollment ages it seems that, if pre-school migrant education programs are designed truly to meet the immediate physical, nutritional and health needs of the developing child as well as the long-term developmental and educational needs, the definition of pre-school must be broad enough to include children in their infancy and extend at the upper levels to provide for children until they are developed mentally, ready to begin the more rigorous and academic programs offered in early elementary school settings.

A closer look at the early childhood studies conducted at Harvard,[7] Syracuse[8] and other centers indicates that the extent of a child's ability to learn new skills at later ages, the complexity of skills able to be mastered and the degree of the older child's enthusiasm in approaching new learning situations is to a large extent, if not totally, dependent on the quality of experiences given the child during the first few months and years of life.

Further, child development studies which indicate that children grow and learn at their own continuous, uneven, unique rate demand that pre-school experiences be available for the child at the age of six, seven and eight if necessary. These studies, combined with our own understanding of the many nutritional, medical and developmental deficiencies that occur in the life of the young migrant child dictate that those persons responsible for establishing programs to supplement and better the lives of young children take a strong stand on the following issues:

a) That the migrant pre-school child is a unique individual with needs particular to his stage of development for whom specific programatic remedies must be implemented.

b) That early childhood migrant programs serve an important role to the child in addition to the needs they may fulfill in allowing the parent to work and the older sibling to attend school.

c) That, given an understanding of the importance of early learning experiences, migrant early childhood programs must be designed for children in early infancy.

d) That pre-school programs must continue to be available to children beyond the traditional pre-school years where necessary.

To answer the first question regarding the daily and seasonal opening and closing times of the pre-school program, a survey of the work conditions of the migrant laborer serves as a basis for a rational answer.

The day of the agricultural laborer begins very early in the morning, often before children are fully awake and usually without the benefit of breakfast. If special programs for pre-school migrant children are not available, the parent has little choice but to leave the infant or young child in the care of an older, non-working member of the migrant community, or in the care of older siblings. Many migrant families have found that the fear created by these kinds of child care situations leads to the only acceptable solution, that of taking their child with them to their place of employment.[9]

The hours of work on crops are long and difficult and rarely accommodate the eating, sleeping and playing needs of children. It seems, therefore, that the question of the length of the day must elicit an answer of eight or nine or ten hours. Such long hours clearly extend the time concept of traditional nursery education programs as well as traditional school programs. However, if young migrant children are to be adequately served, early childhood education programs must incorporate many day care practices.

As to the seasonality of early childhood programs, it is important to serve each individual child. As numbers of migrant pre-schoolers in a particular geographical area dwindle or if only a few children reside in a particular area, alternative child care options, such as family day care, may meet the needs of individual children without straining the budgets of early childhood programs.

Who Pays for Migrant Early Childhood Programs

All day, quality developmental early childhood programs available to children from infancy and upwards to five, six and seven is an expensive investment. Such an investment will require

the financial and philosophical commitment of federal, state and local agencies as well as the hard work of early childhood educators throughout the migrant stream. As migrant families are less a part of local and state communities and more a part of the federal community, it occurs that the greatest input must come from federal dollars and federal efforts. Further, continuous pre-school care is more likely to occur for the young migrant child if federal agencies assume responsibility for tracking children as they move from county to county and state to state; and for establishing programs in localities prior to the arrival of the migrant family. We are advocating an expensive and massive undertaking which "is justified because the quality of early experiences is of utmost importance in healthy human development."[10]

What Types of Early Childhood Programs Should Be Planned

The type of program implemented will vary from locality to locality if a sincere effort is made to meet specific needs of individual children and groups of children. The face of a program will be affected by such factors as number and age of children in a particular locality, specific working conditions of the family and whether the program is located in a user state or a home base state.

Regardless of locality, however, quality education designed to develop all aspects of the child must permeate every migrant early childhood program. The fostering of a sense of trust in people and in the environment, the development of a positive, confident, worthwhile self-concept and the provision of a variety of rich experiences delighting every sensory modality are goals that can be strived for in all early childhood settings.[11]

In order to effectively accomplish the above goals, the early childhood program for infants and pre-schoolers should have two equally important components. The first is an in-school, all-day pre-school program, and the second is a parent education program.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Theory

Philosophical positions of early childhood program planners vary widely resulting in a multitude of curricula strategies that range from the self-directed, child-controlled method of the Bank Street College Early Childhood model[12] to the more structured, goal-specific reinforcement procedures of the Behavior Analysis approach.[13] It is difficult to maintain that one approach is superior to another without an awareness of the individual needs of children enrolled in a specific program. Most early childhood programs tend to practice an eclectric approach. Operating on the theory that all children are unique learners, such an approach probably best benefits the majority of children. All early childhood programs, however, must incorporate certain principles. The first is that a positive, effectual relationship between the child and the teacher is of utmost importance if the child is to become a self-motivated, responsive, enthusiastic learner. The second is that the recognition and fulfillment of a child's individual needs is an essential element in every early childhood curriculum.

Program

Regardless of the theoretical base, all programs must address the concerns related to facilities, staffing, materials and curriculum objectives.

Facilities:

Many specific details regarding the facility housing the pre-school program will be pre-determined by state and local health, safety, sanitation, fire and building codes. In identifying a facility it is important to assure that all such requirements are met.[14] Beyond that, it seems essential to find a facility that 1) is appealing and attractive to children; 2) is located near the homes of the children or near the place of employment of the parents; 3) is easily maintained by the staff (a facility that is otherwise very attractive may become a real burden to the staff if materials and supplies must be packed away nightly in order to accommodate other groups who use the building); 4) that is accommodating to the needs of young children (for example, are the toilet facilities child size? Do the building acoustics tend to minimize the noise necessarily created by active pre-schoolers? Can children and staff feel free to participate in a large range of activities such as painting, water and sand play, maintenance of a pet corner, etc.?); 5) if infants are included, is the facility easily adaptable to infant-related routines such as diapering and feeding?

Staff:

In discussing staffing for migrant early childhood education programs, two issues present themselves for consideration:

1) Staff-Child ratios

2) Staff competencies and requirements

Staff ratios will, like facilities, be somewhat pre-determined by federal, state and local requirements. In general, staff ratios should be similar to those outlined in Social Services Title XX regulations. That is: one adult for each ten children who are four and five years old; one adult for each five children who are three years old; and one adult for each four children who are under the age of three, one adult for each infant under the age of six weeks.[15] Other factors, such as the inclusion of handicapped children, may require that additional staff members be employed.

Specific staff requirements and competencies will be greatly influenced by local school or

community concerns. In general, all staff members should have the following qualifications:

a) An ability to work with children and to create an atmosphere that is warm and accepting;

b) An ability to recognize elements within the environment that are potentially dangerous and to eliminate or minimize those elements.

c) An ability to work cooperatively with other staff members and with parents.

d) Good physical health in order to effectively carry out program components.

e) An understanding of the principles of child development.

f) An ability to work in the program on a regular basis so that program continuity and affective adult-child relationships can be achieved.

g) An understanding of the cultural heritage of the children enrolled in the center.

h) A knowledge of the native language of any bilingual children who may be enrolled.[16]

The quality of the program is absolutely dependent on the sensitivity, creativity and strengths of individual staff members. A poorly designed program can have harmful effects on the children enrolled.[17] It is, therefore, essential that staff members are carefully selected and carefully trained. All migrant early childhood programs should develop and implement well planned staff training and in-service components.

Specific job roles for staff members should include:

1) Program Director - Responsible for the administration of the project.

2) Teacher or Educational Director - Responsible for developing the overall educational aspects of the program including in-service training.

3) Home Base Director - Responsible for developing the parent education component.

4) Nurse - Responsible for overseeing health activities related to the children and for staff training in areas related to health.

5) Teacher-Aid - Responsible for supporting the educational program developed by the teacher.

6) Cook - Responsible for the development of a nutritionally sound menu and the preparation of meals.

7) Janitor - Responsible for building upkeep.

8) Bus Driver - Responsible for pickup and delivery of children.

Depending on the size of the program, some roles may be combined into a job description for a single staff person.

Objectives: Infants and Toddlers

E. A. Willis and H. N. Ricciuti in their book A Good Beginning for Babies, have identified twelve principles which they feel form the core of a good program for very young children. After considerable thought, experience and investigation, Anne Willis and Jennifer Birckmayer adopted these twelve principles as a base for expounding their ideas in developing Guidelines for Day Care Programs for Migrant Infants and Toddlers.[11]

These principles are:

1) Care giving practices should be tailored to the characteristics of each child.

2) There should be continuity of people providing care for children.

3) Children should be cared for in a warm, affectionate way that lets them know they are special.

4) There should be a balance of consistency or sameness, as well as a variety on both care giving practices and the physical environment.

5) The social and physical environment in which a child spends much of his time should be sufficiently responsive to the child's actions that he learns he can exercise some control over it.

6) Every experience is a learning experience, and children should be cared for in a way that optimizes opportunities for learning and social interaction in daily routine activities.

7) Children need protection from overstimulation and disorder.

8) Children should be kept from experiencing unduly severe or prolonged distress.

9) Very early in life, children can begin to develop the attitude that learning is pleasurable.

10) Children enjoy and learn a great deal from interacting with other children.

11) In order to do a good job, care-givers need to enjoy their roles.

12) In a good program, there is consistency between day care and home care giving practices.[18]

An understanding of these principles combined with a detailed chart outlining developmental landmarks that may be expected to surface during the 2nd and 36th month form the necessary base from which activities for infants and toddlers in group care can emerge. We follow the lead of Jennifer Brickmayer and Anne Willis in not outlining specific activities for infant programs. We re-emphasize the importance of recent findings that the infant begins from his first day to learn, to construct theories, to have expectations about other peoples' behavior and to construct the basic rules of his language.[19] It is therefore essential that infant programs stress individual care and the development of affectual relationships that lead to good feelings about the self.

Materials: Infants and Toddlers

The list of materials necessary to implement a meaningful infant and toddler program is adopted from Day Care 2: Serving Infants.[20, 21] It is offered as a suggestion.

- Refrigerator
- Stroller
- Covered plastic containers for diapers
- Large piece of carpet
- Large clock
- Low, open shelves
- Diapering table
- Wind-up swing
- Hot plate
- Wash cloths
- Bibs
- Cubbies
- Large cushions
- Record player or radio
- Cribs with mattresses
- Playpen
- Individual feeding tables
- Sterilizer
- Blankets
- Sheets
- Extra clothing
- Diapers (cloth and disposable)

- Bottles
- Plastic feeding dishes
- Plastic bags
- Washable stuffed toys
- Books
- Balls
- Simple wooden puzzles
- Mobiles
- Rattles
- Plastic bottles, spoons, etc.
- Pieces of fabric
- Hats
- Cups
- Spoons
- Squeeze toys
- Small wheeled toys
- Cribgyms
- Stacking toys
- Pull toys
- Records
- Large and small boxes
- Large and small cans
- Purses

Objectives – Three, Four and Five Year Olds:

The objectives of a specific program will vary greatly from those of any other pre-school program particularly if a concerted attempt is made to meet the individual needs of the children enrolled.

The following list is offered only as a suggestion of some activities and objectives to be considered. It is, by no means, intended to be all-inclusive or complete.[22, 23]

A. *Goal:* Language Development

Objective: To help the child develop oral language skills

Activity: 1. Provide opportunities for creative dramatization.

Examples:

a) Provide house-keeping equipment
b) Provide dress-up clothes
c) Provide opportunities for children to imitate animal motions and sounds

Activity. 2. Provide opportunities for children to participate in oral language activity.

Examples:

a) Encourage children to retell stories
b) Sing songs
c) Play musical games such as farmer-in-the-dell
d) Play games that give individual children an opportunity to speak - such as Did-you-ever-see-a-lassie
e) Make tape-recordings of children's speech
f) Encourage the use of puppets
g) Provide time for staff members to talk with children on a one-to-one basis

Objective: To help children develop receptive language skills.

Activity: 1. Provide opportunities for children to listen.

Examples:

a) Play records
b) Read or tell stories

c) Talk to children on an individual basis

d) Give simple meaningful instructions such as: "please close the door"

e) Play games that require children to follow directions such as Put-your-finger-on-your-nose

B. *Goal:* Development of a positive self-concept.

Objectives: To help the child develop an image of himself as a successful, worthwhile person

Activity 1. Provide opportunities for the child to form a conception of his physical being.

Examples:

a) Look in a mirror

b) Play games that name body parts such as Hokey-Pokey

c) Trace the child's body on a large piece of paper

d) Take a picture of the child

e) Make paint or plaster paris replicas of the child's hand and foot

f) Using a shadow-box, trace the child's silhouette

Activity 2. Provide opportunities for the child to make real contributions to class.

Examples:

a) Ask the child to help set the table for lunch

b) Ask the child to be responsible for putting away certain materials or supplies such as wagons, puzzles, books, etc.

c) Ask the child to assist in planning the menu

d) Ask the child to select a story or game to be played

e) Ask the child to assist another child

Activity 3. Provide opportunities to give special recognition to individual children.

Examples:

a) Celebrate birthdays

b) Celebrate days that are special in the child's culture

c) Initiate "King or Queen-for-the-day" activities

d) Display works of art

e) Praise efforts and accomplishments

Activity: 4. Provide opportunities for children to develop self-discipline.

Examples:

a) Ask children to participate only in activities in which they can succeed

b) Arrange room so that natural boundaries exist

c) Prepare a selection of activities and offer choices to children

d) Establish behavioral limits

C. *Goal:* Cognitive development.

Objective: To help children develop sensory-perceptual skills.

Activity: 1. Provide opportunities for children to develop patterning and sequencing skills.

Examples:

a) String beads
b) Play with blocks
c) Copy rhythms with rhythm band instruments
d) March or move to drum beats
e) Put together puzzles
f) Play with dominoes
g) Play picture lotto games

Activity. 2. Provide opportunities for children to develop classifying skills.

Examples:

a) Sort buttons
b) Play with blocks
c) Sort textured materials

Activity. 3. Provide opportunities for children to develop comparison skills.

Examples:

a) Play with blocks
b) Play with water
c) Play with sand
d) Play games that require children to make comparative judgments such as Mother-may-I (take a large step, take a small step, etc.)
e) Provide opportunities for children to handle a variety of textures, such as cotton, blocks, silk, etc.
f) Listen to musical tones, such as bells
g) Serve both hot and cold drinks such as lemonade and cocoa

Activity. 4. Provide opportunities for children to develop generalization skills.

Examples:

a) Finger-paint with a variety of materials such as starch, soap suds, and pudding
b) Play with sand
c) Use a variety of materials for stringing such as beads, buttons and cut-up straws

Activity. 5. Provide opportunities for children to develop identification skills.

Examples:

a) Play color games
b) Make verbal labels
c) Eat a variety of foods
d) Provide "smelling bottles"
e) Play with a "feely box"
f) Identify sounds such as a car horn, the wind, rain, etc.

Activity. 6. Provide opportunities for children to use all of their sensory mechanism in developing concepts.

Objective: To help children develop environmental awareness.

Activity: 1. Provide opportunities for children to explore a variety of scientific phenomena.

Examples:

a) Plant seeds or a garden
b) Keep a class pet
c) Go on a picnic
d) Provide a magnifying glass
e) Provide a magnet
f) Go fishing
g) Play with blocks
h) Make play dough
i) Play outdoors
j) Make popsicles
k) Provide class cooking projects
l) Take a nature walk
m) Play with wheel toys

Activity: 2. Provide opportunities for children to explore a variety of social phenomena.

Examples:

a) Take field trips (grocery store, fire station)
b) Ask parents to teach a skill
c) Ask community people to make class visits

D. *Goal:* Motor development and fine muscle coordination.

Objective: To help the child develop motor skills.

Activity: 1. Provide an opportunity for the child to participate in a variety of large muscle activities.

Examples:

a) Play with tricycles
b) Hammer nails
c) Play with wagons
d) Play with swings
e) Use tools and work bench
f) Play with balls
g) Jump rope
h) Climb on climbing apparatus
i) Set up an obstacle course using chairs, tables, etc.
j) Play games that teach activities such as skipping, hopping, running

Activity: 2. Provide opportunities for children to participate in a variety of fine-muscle activities.

Examples:

a) Use paints
b) Use crayons

c) Play with clay and play dough
d) Use finger paints
e) Use scissors
f) Play with sand
g) Trace objects
h) String beads
i) Play with water
j) Bounce balls
k) Track sounds
l) Make and use paper mache
m) Play finger games
n) Play shadow games
o) Make paper chains

Other goals, objectives and activities can and should be added to those described above so that the program presented to children has variety and creativity.

Material – Three, Four and Five Year Olds:

Obviously, the materials included in a program will depend on the activities planned for the program. Some items, however, are basic to almost all early childhood education projects. These materials include:

- Housekeeping equipment
- Dolls
- Dress-up clothes
- Child-size tables and chairs
- Sand
- Cot or mats for sleeping
- Water
- Flour and salt for play dough
- Clay
- Adequate shelving and storage
- Things to sort (buttons, bottle caps, etc.)
- A set of unit blocks
- Record player and records
- Textured materials (scraps of cloth, etc.)
- Things to manipulate (bolts and nuts, etc.)
- Tricycles
- Wagons
- Tools and work bench
- Large balls
- Paints
- Primary Pencils
- Assortment of paper
- Scissors (left and right)
- Full length mirror
- A climbing apparatus
- Individual cubbies
- Puzzles
- Books
- Tape recorder
- Rhythm band instruments
- Puppets

SPECIAL AREAS OF CONCERN

In planning early childhood programs for migrant infants and pre-schoolers, three areas of special concern emerge. These areas are health, nutrition, and a system for tracking the movements of children's families in the migrant stream. While health and nutrition are only of general interest in most early childhood programs, it is felt that the special environmental circumstances influencing the life of the migrant child usually severly hamper the family in their attempts to provide adequate attention to these essential elements. Because health practices and adequate nutrition are vital for healthy growth and development, special care must be given to develop strong program components in these areas.

Health:

The mobility of migrant families renders it difficult for parents to identify needed health services in various geographical locations. The low income status of migrant families makes it difficult to purchase those services once a provider has been identified.[24] It is felt, therefore, that migrant early childhood education programs should accept responsibility for coordinating and providing those services.[25] Such an undertaking would include:

a) The provision of regular well-child checkups by a physician.

b) Communication to parents regarding special dental and medical problems of their children.

c) Identification of health providers in all health areas.

d) Assistance to families in obtaining and paying for services.

Further, because many migrant children come to early childhood programs with chronic health problems; because migrant children with acute health problems can receive better attention in the pre-school program than in labor camps; and because migrant children need to learn good health practices; a full time registered nurse should be elementary in the project staffing pattern.

The nurse should accept responsibility for:

a) Identification of health providers.

b) Scheduling of routine care at clinics.

c) Communication with parents regarding special health problems.

d) Development and implementation of health in-service programs for the staff.

e) Entering health information on Migrant Student Record Transfer System.

f) Development of materials and health curriculum for children.

Nutrition:

Adequate nutritious foods during the early developing years of life is a vital ingredient for the fulfillment of human potentiality. There is no substitute for the effects of a balanced diet served in a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere on the general physical and mental health of the young child. Because we know that the migrant pre-schooler often receives inadequate amounts of food and inappropriate types of food, it is essential that nutrition and eating by key elements in migrant early childhood programs.

The goals of the nutrition component of the early childhood program should include:

a) The planning and preparation of food that will contribute to the total nutritional needs of the young child.

b) The planning and preparation of foods that are appealing and appetizing to the young child.

c) The planning and preparation of foods that are culturally significant to the child.

d) Serving foods in a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere.

e) Especially in very young children, careful consultation with the parent concerning the feeding and eating habits of the child so that a continuation of practices between home and school can be established.

f) The implementation of a nutrition education program for children and parents.

Migrant Student Record Transfer System:

The assurance of continuous quality early childhood experiences available to the young migrant child on a regular basis as he moves from locality to locality will require the conscious effort of all persons interested in and responsible for the development of programs for pre-school migrant children. Service must be available and waiting to welcome the child as he moves with his family from state to state. One element necessary in the provision of continuous care is the ability to track the family's movements.

In order to be adequately prepared to greet a child upon his arrival, migrant early childhood educators must know 1) when the child will arrive in their area, and 2) what experiences the child will have already had when he arrives.

Migrant education leaders have already taken a step toward the fulfillment of these goals through the development of the Migrant Student Record Transfer System. Through use of this computerized plan, it is possible to obtain pertinent information concerning the academic and health status of a child. Unfortunately, only a few of the thousands of pre-school migrant children traveling with their parents have been enrolled in the MSRTS computer banks. Educators concerned about the welfare of young migrant children must make a concerted effort to enroll all pre-school children attending early childhood programs.

Secondly, a nation-wide effort to identify and track migrant children must be undertaken.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

> Parents, parental involvement and respect for the wishes and child rearing practices of the family are (vitally) important aspects of an (early childhood program.) Parents are the first and most important teachers and models of the child. It is never the right of the child care personnel to surplant the role of the parent but rather to supplement parents in their efforts, and support them in their responsibilities. If the staff is aware of a more appropriate method of handling certain child-related problems, then it is the duty of the staff to relate that information to the parent in a factual, positive, supportive manner.[27]

The best care for children will result when parents and early childhood educators work hand-in-hand to provide experiences that integrate the child's life at home and in school. Both parent and professionals have important pieces to contribute to the total program designed for the child.

A migrant parent education program is an aspect that permeates throughout the early childhood project. It begins with the first conversation between the parent and a representative staff member and continues throughout the period that the family resides in the locality. It involves continuous communication between parent and staff members concerning the activities of the child in the school and at home. It may include some informal small group instructions on specified topics.

Because migrant parents work very long hours, may be hesitant to come to the program facility, and may feel uncomfortable in traditional adult education programs, the home base director will have to be resourceful and creative in initiating parent education projects that will be effective and useful to the migrant parent.

For effective planning the home base director should begin by determining the child development related topics that would be of greatest value to the parents of the children enrolled in the program. The topics will vary from group to group but a few areas seem to be in constant need of discussion. These areas include:

a) Health - prenatal care for pregnant mothers; regular well baby check-ups; immunizations; health practices such as bathing, shampooing, proper rest, exercise, oral care, proper clothing, etc.; common diseases; adjustments to unique living conditions such as no running water, community bath-houses, etc.; location of health clinics; application for Medicaid cards; techniques for taking care of sick children, etc.

b) Nutrition - nutrient requirements at various ages, preparation of formula; preparation of foods; hand washing; recipes for preparing simple, nutritious foods that can be eaten on-the-run; development of good eating habits; consequences of poor eating habits; food buying practices; etc.

c) Child Development - development of positive self-concept; development of affectual parent-child relationships, language development, good toys for children that can be purchased or made inexpensively; importance of large muscle development, providing a safe play environment at home; an understanding of what good experiences for young children are.

d) "Assertiveness" Education - helping a parent understand that his good feelings about himself have a definite effect on the healthy development of his child; helping a parent feel good about himself.

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Once the topics to be taught have been determined, the home base director must find a method that will be an effective vehicle for teaching parents. The methods will be as individual as the parents. Some of the methods that may work include:

a) Informal communications between the parent and the early childhood program. The communication may be written notes or oral conversation.

b) The inclusion of parents in the early childhood program as teacher-aids, volunteers or observers.

c) Home visits by staff members to the home of the parent.

d) Inclusion of parents as members of local project advisory boards.

e) Parent meetings and social activities held at the project sight in the evening.

f) Formal adult education classes for parents who so-desire.[28]

Regardless of the curriculum topics or the strategies for implementation, both staff members and parents must feel that they are respected, valued partners in planning experiences that influence the ultimate development of the child.

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