

Methods of Teaching Young Children: Effective Learning Activities

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Outline

- Greeting/Circle time
- Discussions
- Exploration
- Stories
- Songs
- Games
- Enriched Play

Greeting/Circle Time

- **Greeting Time:** Brief group discussion where children typically sit in a circle
- **Goals of Greeting Time**
 - Foster a sense of community in the class
 - Help children transition into the school day
 - Nurture children's language skills

Greeting Time

- There are many options for activities during Greeting Time
 - Exchange greetings from different cultures
 - Read or tell a story
 - Sing song(s)
 - Pray
 - Play a game
 - Introduce a letter/number/color/shape of the week
 - Discuss social issues that affect the class
 - Introduce a new topic/theme of study
 - Reinforce lessons taught the previous day (e.g., vocabulary words, math skill, science concept, etc.)

Discussions

- **Discussion:** Conversation about a specific topic
 - Conversations require question-and-answer
 - By asking children questions (instead of giving information first), the teacher is able to:
 - Get children actively involved in the topic
 - Identify and correct children's misconceptions
 - Add additional details to children's knowledge
- Discussions can be used for:
 - Assessing children's previous knowledge
 - Build on children's current knowledge
 - Large group, small group, or individual instruction

Exploration

- **Explore:** To investigate, study, or become familiar with something by testing or experimenting
- Exploration is very useful for developing science and maths skills
 - Maths: Counting, comparing, adding, measuring
 - Science
 - Deeply learn a wide range of scientific concepts
 - Develop scientific inquiry skills

Stories

- Benefits of stories
 - Get children's attention
 - Make a concept practical
 - Improves children's understanding and memory of a topic
 - Improves language abilities
 - Develops children's imagination
 - Improves children's knowledge about the world

Songs

- Benefits of songs
 - Quickly gets children's attention
 - Improves language skills (even for children with poor English skills)
 - Improves phonemic awareness (an important emergent literacy skill)
 - Children remember songs easily
 - Songs can effectively teach academic content
- Finding songs
 - Search youtube for the topic

Games

- **Benefits of Games**
 - Teaches children to follow rules
 - Teaches important social skills
 - Gives children practice in important skills
 - Helps children think more systematically

Enriched Play

- **Enriched:** To make richer by adding a desirable ingredient/nutrient
- **Enriched Play:** Make play richer/effective for nurturing holistic development as the teacher adds “nutrients”
- **Enriched Play Strategy #1:** Develop separate learning activities based on children’s play
 - Use any of the other teaching methods described in this course to implement a learning activity using the theme of children’s play
- **Enriched Play Strategy #2:** As children are playing, add “nutrients” to emphasize the language, reading, writing, maths, and science topics that children are implicitly interacting with
 - Ask a question and/or pose a challenge to get children to think about an academic concept