

Learning Plan 6

**Promoting Child Development through Activities**

**(4 hours)**

Overview: This Learning Plan explores how activities promote child development. A wide variety of activities for children are possible: physical/motor, reading readiness, language, prewriting, art, math, social science, science, emotional/social, sensory, music, dramatic play, etc. All activities should be developmentally appropriate and safe for children.

Learning Objectives:

- a. Review Wisconsin's Administrative rules and regulations affecting activities in family and group child care
- b. Explore the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards
- c. Explain how curriculum planning fits within a daily schedule
- d. Explain how curriculum planning relates to child development
- e. Identify strategies to promote child development
- f. Use lesson plans for developing all domains of development
- g. Examine developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor environments
- h. Select materials, toys, and games that are developmentally appropriate for various ages
- i. Explore plans for indoor and outdoor activities

Target Competency: selecting developmentally appropriate activities, equipment and materials for children.

**Required Resources:**

Internet Links:

- [Wisconsin Administrative Licensing Rules and Regulations for Family Child Care](#)
- [Wisconsin Administrative Licensing Rules and Regulations for Group Child Care](#)
- [Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards](#)
- [Active Early](#)
- [Developmentally Appropriate Early Childhood Education Video](#)

Handouts:

- Learning Center Suggested Materials
- Ideas and Suggestions for Materials Outdoors
- Various lesson plan samples

### Introduction

While providing care and education to young children, it is important to understand the development of each child in your care. This includes knowing about typical child development, having developmentally appropriate expectations for children at each age and stage of development, and planning to provide activities and materials that promote each child's development. The materials and activities that are provided within a learning environment should match the developmental needs of the children. Growth and development comes when the individual needs of each child are respected and intentional planning occurs.

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) explains that children develop within five main domains of learning, Health and Physical development, Social and Emotional development, Language Development and Communication, Cognition and General Knowledge, and Approaches to Learning. A wide variety of activities including these areas; physical/motor, literacy, art, math, social emotional, science, sensory, music and dramatic play, encourages the development of the whole child.

**Assignment 1:**

Review Wisconsin Administrative Rules and Regulations (Licensing Rules).

Using the Group and Family child care licensing rules; locate the rules regarding child development and activity planning. These are listed in many places throughout the documents.

List all of the developmental areas that Wisconsin requires you to provide materials and plan activities for.

When planning for your program and creating a daily schedule, licensing rules state the schedule should be balanced. Give three examples of what this could look like.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards:**

The WMELS is an evidenced-based framework that was developed by the state of WI to serve as the foundation of efforts to help children learn and grow up healthy in Wisconsin. The WMELS allow for families, professionals, and policy makers to:

- Share a common language and responsibility for the well-being of children from birth to first grade
- Know and understand developmental expectations of young children; and
- Understand the connection among the foundations of early childhood

(WMELS, fourth edition, page 1)

**Assignment 2:**

An overview of the WMELS can be found on the [Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners \(WECCP\) website](#).

Review the following: What the WMELS are, the Guiding Principles, and locate an upcoming training in your area and consider attending this training in the future, as part of your professional development. These can also be found in your WMELS book.

List each of the **Guiding Principles** and explain how each principle impacts your work.

Guiding Principle:	How it impacts to your work
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	
9)	

**Curriculum as it relates to child development and planning a daily schedule:**

**Curriculum** refers to all the learning that children do. The curriculum is the plan for children's learning experiences, including the content of what and how children are learning, along with what the staff and families will do and/or say to help children learn. The goals established for children's learning helps to determine the curriculum. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), to provide high quality care and education for young children, a child care teacher needs to implement curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive.

The curriculum helps children gain knowledge, skills and values that a child care program feels are important to have. Providing facts, concepts and ideas and teaching children a variety of skills (and allowing them time to practice these skills) are key in the early education process. Lillian Katz's article, "What Should Young Children Be Learning," highlights the research that shows that learning is most effective when children are interactive, rather than passively sitting and listening, with materials, adults and the environment. In "Curriculum That Matters," Margie Carter suggests thinking of curriculum as how a teacher and child spend their time together. This includes the activities, materials, interactions and relationships with peers and adults, daily routines (naps, meals, and transitions), natural conflict among children, the arrangement of furnishings, and the overall environment.

There are many different types of curriculums that can be purchased. However, purchasing a set of books or activities alone does not mean a program *uses* a curriculum. The curriculum will guide the decisions and plans regarding the content of what children learn and because of this it should match the values and philosophy of the program. At the forefront of curriculum are always the needs and interests of the children. Interests, along with growth and development, are unique to each child, and will therefore be different with each group of children, requiring the teacher to continuously reevaluate the content for developmental appropriateness.

In the following YouTube clip, presented by Fern Avery, a brief overview of the importance of planning meaningful environments is presented. The clip describes the importance of the materials provided and activities planned and how they connect to the learning that can occur within the early childhood environment.

### Assignment 3:

View the clip at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-h4IHlqkcc>

### Lesson Planning for Learning Experiences and the Environment:

The curriculum is going to help to identify the desired outcome (or what we hope children will learn) for all areas of development. The activities planned for children, organization of the environment, materials provided, daily schedule, and interactions with children are all designed to help achieve the outcomes of the curriculum. Lesson planning allows for an early care and education provider to organize on paper how the child will learn or practice a particular skill. The lesson plan is a thoughtful and intentional way to plan for each area of development as well as for the goals of each child.

A thoughtful lesson plan allows the day to flow smoothly and provides a teacher with a guide to the day or week's events while always remembering how important it is to remain flexible with the plan. If the children are showing an interest in something other than what the teacher has planned, it is okay (and even encouraged) to follow the lead of the children, even if that means the activity on the lesson plan is not gotten to.

**For example:** While on the playground a group of children are huddled around the climber where they have found a large spider web. Children are discussing the size of the web, and fly that is trapped in the web and the spider in the middle of the web. They have great conversation about the spider and start looking for spiders on the ground. After 60 minutes of outside play it is time to come inside. The lesson plan indicates that for circle time the teacher will read, The Big Hungry Bear and Red Ripe Strawberry followed by an optional small group time where children will sort the fruit counters. A teacher who is following the interest of children and wanting to maximize learning outcomes may choose to change the lesson plan for the day to read, The Facts About Spiders and then provide yarn and other materials for children to experiment with replicating the spider web they saw on the playground as the optional small group activity. While this will likely not happen every day, when children show deep interest in a topic or experience their learning will increase when the curriculum and lesson plan can support their interests.

A lesson plan could consist of activities/materials for small and/or large group times and should also include a plan for the materials that will be available and accessible within the environment. A substantial portion of the day should be dedicated to **free play**; children

choosing what they want to do, how they want to do it and when to stop and try something else. Free play does not imply that there are no boundaries as it still requires planning for learning through the environment. Children need guidance and active involvement from the teacher during free play. The sample lesson plans included allow for intentional organization of the environment for free play while planning for individual learning centers.

Daily learning experiences and activities are written in a lesson plan. These experiences and activities are intentionally chosen by the teacher while thinking about the following;

- Interests of each child
- Developmental abilities of each child
- Goals for each child
- What is happening in the world around the children?

*Scenario: Three year old, Gavin has been in your care for about one month. You notice that each day he arrives he chooses to play with the match box cars. You also notice that when he was snack helper, he was counting the napkins and counted 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10. He has also talked a lot about the big truck his Grandpa drives.*

Using the above information, you decide to plan a car counting activity in the block area. With this activity in mind, you join Gavin playing in the block area when you notice he is there. You introduce the laminated numbers you have drawn roads on to Gavin and the other children who are playing in the block area and begin counting cars with them. You have considered Gavin's interests and his developmental abilities regarding number concepts.

This thoughtful planning leads to meaningful experiences for children. Earlier in this session you were provided with an overview of the WMELS, which include five domains of learning; **Health and Physical Development, Social and Emotional Development, Language Development and Communication, Approaches to Learning, Cognition and General Knowledge**. Planning learning experiences for all five of these domains allows the teacher to focus on the development of the whole child.

**Promoting child development through lesson plan:**

There are many, many different ways to write a lesson plan. Provided are samples of different plans which can be used as a guide for you when thinking about the purpose and use of your own lesson plan.

- Theme:



Some teachers choose to plan according to a theme. The theme may help to provide you with a focused learning topic. Themes should be reflective of the interests of children, developmental abilities, as well as individual and group needs. Themes should NOT be chosen simply because it is what was done last year at a particular time.

If you choose to use themes in your planning remember it is not necessary for every activity to be related to the theme, nor should the theme be the only thing guiding your activity and material selection. First and foremost must be the developmental goals of the children. Themes are not required for lesson planning and some teachers prefer not to use them, instead focusing primarily on the individual and group goals of the children in the group.

- Learning Experiences/Activities:

In the attached sample plans you will see daily areas to record learning experiences for each of the developmental areas. These plans can be specific activities you are going to provide or materials you will make accessible within the environment or experiences the children will have. Not all children need to do everything on the plan every day and alternate activities should always be available. A minimum of three choices should be accessible.

There is also an example of a lesson plan that allows a teacher to plan materials and experiences within each area of the learning environment. There is no need to list every material that is available in each area, but rather to list what changes or additions might occur.

- Goals:

You will notice that there is a place to list a group goal on the sample lesson plan. A **group goal** is what you are hoping the majority of children will learn. For example, if you are planning for a transportation theme, your group goal might be, “Children will recognize and name different types of transportation.”

**Individual child goals** are also needed when considering what materials, activities and experiences should be available for children. These goals help us think intentionally about the individual needs of the children in our care. You will consider where a child is developmentally and what are the next steps in helping him/her reach the next stage of development. The WMELS or a reliable developmental checklist are helpful tools when setting goals. All goals should be challenging yet achievable. Many teachers prefer to list their goals on a separate piece of paper (in some cases a portfolio). The teacher may make note on the lesson plan of who a specific activity was planned for.

**For example**, thinking back to the earlier example of Gavin, you might set a goal such as, “Gavin will count to ten.” On the lesson plan you would then list counting cars in the block area as an activity. It is not necessary for every child to have an individual goal every week. One goal per child per month is ample.

When planning activities or experiences for children you should have a purpose or goal in mind for the activity. In other words, what are you hoping the children will gain or learn from the experience? Some of the activities or experiences planned should be directly related to the goals for the individual child. Not all activities have to be linked to a specific group or individual goal.

Goals will likely not be achieved in a week’s time. Some goals may be repeated for a few weeks, with different activities planned to allow children practice in mastering them. There may also be times that you plan a goal and activity for a child and s/he shows no interest. It is okay to move on to another goal focusing on another area of development.

One of the sample lesson plans is just for infants. This form allows for consideration of the goals for each infant in your care. Write the goal and then plan an activity that will allow the infant opportunities to practice or work on the goal. Again, most goals are not achieved in just a week’s time, so it may be necessary to repeat the goal for a few weeks and try different activities that allow practice. The materials available in the learning environment should support the goal. Sometimes it is not a material that will support the goal, but rather an interaction or response the teacher will provide.

**Example:** Baby Sophia’s goal might be to use gestures (non-verbal) to communicate or get attention. An activity or experience a teacher could plan to support this goal would be, when Sophia puts her arms up to be picked up, the teacher will say, “You want me to pick you up?”

**Example:** Baby Jaylen is beginning to use his arms and legs to move very short distances. Jaylen’s goal might be to begin crawling. The activity to support this goal could be to place Jaylen on a blanket with interesting toys nearby, encouraging him to crawl to the toys.

Infant caregivers must be very aware of the need to change materials within the learning environment to meet the rapidly changing developmental needs of the infants.

**Developmentally Appropriate Environments – Indoors and Outdoors:**

Children should be provided with opportunities to actively explore and investigate while applying new skills through both child and teacher-initiated experiences. Many **child-initiated experiences** occur during free play time when a *child chooses* the type of play to engage in, *where* within the learning environment to play and *with whom* to play.

A variety of play can be supported when **learning centers** are created within the learning environment. Each learning center contains a set of materials focused on a specific area of development. Examples of learning centers recommended in the Environment Rating Scales books (ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS) include:

Fine Motor	Music and Movement	Sensory (sand and/or water)
Science and Nature	Literacy	Art
Blocks	Math	Dramatic Play or Housekeeping

Refer to the handout, “Learning Center Materials, Ideas and Suggestions” and consider what to include in each center.

Learning centers can be set up for individual children or small groups of children to work in. The materials provided in each center all contain the same focus. Ideally, materials should be sorted in containers and labelled, with like materials being stored together. This type of classroom organization allows for children to become more engaged with the materials and learn at a higher level. To keep children interested and engaged, materials must be rotated and match the current developmental levels. This becomes reflected in your lesson planning.

**Example:** In the block area, two types of blocks are accessible to children along with vehicles, people and animals. With these materials together, children will have a better idea of how to use the blocks. The type of animals available in the block area can be rotated to reflect the interest of the children. Teachers can facilitate play by helping children use the blocks to build pens for the farm animals, or make a road out of blocks for tractors to drive on.

**Example:** Dramatic play considerations - Are the play dishes, pots and pans and food stored near the housekeeping furnishings? Are there accessories, such as blankets, bottles and diapers for the dolls that are stored close to the dolls? When these materials are each stored in separate containers and near one another on a shelf,

children begin to see the connections and the creative play becomes purposeful. When all materials are stored together, a child can pretend to feed a baby doll in a high chair and then cover the baby up with a blanket and put it to bed in the nearby doll bed.

In both of the above examples teachers need to be involved in guiding children's play when they are first given these opportunities. Teachers facilitate play by being actively involved in the play (while still scanning the environment and being mindful of the whole group) and then slowly backing out of the play as children show they are able to be on their own. The teacher continues to check in with the children throughout free play as s/he supervises the large group.

The outdoor learning environment provided to children must be intentionally planned just as is done for the indoor environment. The outdoor space should be welcoming and inviting while inspiring creativity and physical development. The playground can be thought of as an extension of the indoor learning environment. Playing on large play equipment helps children develop large motor skills such as running, climbing and riding tricycles. With adult guidance and supervision on a playground, children can learn to experience risk-taking and develop self-control. Safety must always come first, with teachers ensuring that the materials and equipment are appropriate for all age groups that will utilize the space.

Refer to the handout, "Ideas and Suggestions for Materials Outdoors" to further consider what could be included in the outdoor space.

Refer to the Active Early resource book to identify additional ideas on active play experiences that could be planned for gross motor learning.

[https://d3knp61p33sjvn.cloudfront.net/2015/04/Active\\_Early.pdf](https://d3knp61p33sjvn.cloudfront.net/2015/04/Active_Early.pdf)

While outdoor time is certainly an opportunity for children to burn off energy, it is also a time for continued learning. It is recommended by Wisconsin's YoungStar program that teachers plan teacher-led outdoor/gross motor activities daily to encourage physical development. There are many resources to consider using when planning for these activities located in your Active Early book. While lesson plans reflect what will happen in the indoor learning environment, they should also include the outdoor space.

### Assignment 4

#### Classifying Activities with Developmental Domains

Identify which developmental domain (listed above and in the WMELS) the following activities could be best classified under.

Activity	Developmental Domain
Singing Nursery Rhymes with children	
Playing Duck Duck Goose with a small group of children	
Provide an infant with tummy time	
Playing catch with a child, using a large soft ball	
Provide a variety of different colored objects and have the child sort	
Plan to have a tea party with children, allowing them to use imaginative thinking	
When a child is expressing an emotion the teacher verbally labels the emotion	
Read a story and then ask (an older preschooler) what happened first and then what happened?	

Implement two of these activities and write down what you notice about the children while they are engaged in the activity.

**Assignment 5:**

Explore a Variety of Lesson Plan Samples

Review the lesson plan samples provided and choose one to create a sample lesson plan on or use one of your own.

As you complete the lesson plan ensure the following can be identified:

All areas of development are represented throughout the week

Goals for either a group of children or individual children are included

Interest centers reflect the plan (which may require that you use the environmental plan in conjunction with another plan)