School-Age Children At Your Child Care Center

Guidance for Teachers and Directors

Agenda for CHILDREN
...a voice for Louisiana's children and families
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OUTFITTING A SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE ENVIRONMENT

When planning to provide school-age care in your program, your physical environment is the place to start. When environments are attractive, well-organized, interesting, and comfortable, they provide a foundation for a varied program that can address the diverse developmental needs of school-age children. The look and feel of well-planned environments let children know they are welcome and valued. Well-planned environments are inviting, encourage productive play and positive relationships, stimulate imagination, foster learning, and promote children’s development.

The following list has been developed to help you evaluate your current school-age classroom(s) and outdoor environments and think about ways you can improve your program for children aged 5-12.

GENERAL PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Set up your space so that children have access to equipment appropriate for their age/size.
2. Arrange room and materials so children can access the materials available to them independently.
3. Ensure that children can select the activities they wish to participate in on their own.
4. When designing your space, make sure that you can supervise all areas, including any private spaces.

INDOOR ENVIRONMENT

1. Furnishings
   a. Use shelving units to make materials accessible to children - you can use shelving units, bookcases (stabilize these by placing against the wall or back to back), small tables, milk crates, rolling carts, baskets, buckets, plastic bins, laundry baskets, etc. to hold materials that are to be accessible to the children.
   b. If you have enough shelving, furniture, and/or other barriers, set them up so that there are clear boundaries for specific activity areas and open spaces are minimized to discourage running.
   c. Place like materials together in the same general area so children know where to find and put away similar items/materials/activities.
   d. If you have space and shelving, furniture, and/or other barriers, separate loud and quiet and active and calm spaces. Examples of quiet, calm activity areas are the library, art, or writing centers. Loud, active areas might include toys and games or dramatic play. Make sure there is space specifically designated for completing schoolwork and/or homework.
   e. Make sure the areas you are planning to use for science and art activities have easy access to one or more sinks.
   f. Technology areas need access to electrical outlets. If you are supporting children to complete online learning, think about what kind of technology they need and how you
can support that (i.e. Do you have access to a computer(s) or tablet(s) and internet so that children can complete their work or explore their interests?)

g. Make sure you have a quiet space and table/seating for school work to be completed during the school year.
h. Identify a place for the children to store their personal belongings (hooks, baskets, bins, table, etc.).

2. **Seating Arrangements**
   a. Use tables and chairs that are the correct size for the school-age children
      i. If you do not have appropriately sized tables, consider how to get full-sized table(s)? Many tables in a preschool classroom have legs that can be adjusted to be longer. Check to see if you have those types of tables before purchasing new tables.
      ii. If you do not have appropriately sized chairs, where can you find large chairs? Can you ask families to send in portable chairs? Do you have any at home that you can bring in?
      iii. Do you have a couch you can add for children to sit on and read or complete a quiet activity?
   b. Rugs for lounging and reading
      i. Use rugs to delineate space for construction, reading, and playing games/using puzzles
      ii. Do you have a few large pillows or cushions that can be placed in the reading area?

3. **Activity Areas and Materials**
   a. Make sure you have enough materials for children to meaningfully play together in activity areas.
   b. Provide various heights of tables or surfaces to work on.
   c. Think about the pictures, displays, print or writing materials that can support children’s learning and engagement in each area. You can get old magazines from parents or thrift stores that children can use to find pictures of things that interest them and make collages to hang in activity areas. Dollar Tree has paper, drawing, and painting tools that can be used to provision activity areas.
   d. School-age Activity Areas and Materials to Provision those Areas
      i. **Table Games/Toys and Games Area:** Board games, puzzles & place to store/keep puzzles while in progress, card games (cards, UNO, Go Fish, etc.), etc.
      ii. **Books/Creative Language Area:** Books (chapter books for older children, books reflecting interests of children in group), paper and writing tools (pencils, pens, markers), magazines (any you can find and share that are appropriate)
      iii. **Art (and Crafts):** Planned activities and materials accessible for children to choose and use in their own way. Materials for easel painting, painting at a table (tempera, watercolors, different sizes and types of brushes), jewelry making, clay, materials for weaving. Any of the following can be included in the Art area: found materials, tape, glue, staplers and staples, crayons, colored pencils, paints, paper of different types and sizes, scissors (child safe), string, yarn, wire, collage materials, recycled magazines, recycled materials like toilet paper and paper towel rolls (families can be asked to donate these), plastic water bottles, corks, plastic lids from laundry detergent bottles, etc.
iv. **STEAM materials:** microscopes with slides, magnifying glasses and objects to examine, computers with appropriate software, batteries, simple experiments, tools and used items to dismantle and explore, math games, etc.

v. **Dramatics:** puppets, props, clothes that can be used for costumes or dress-up

vi. **Construction:** Legos, bristle blocks, Lincoln logs, erector sets, unit blocks, Styrofoam and toothpicks, wire, sticks

vii. **Music:** CD players, headsets, musical instruments (children could make these as an activity - shakers, tin can xylophone, rubber band guitars, etc.), scarves, streamers

viii. **Special Interests/Projects:** Provide materials based on interests of the children in the classroom or the projects the group is working on

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**OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT**

1. Make sure to have a space for school-age children to play outside in groups or alone.
2. Make sure there is adequate space for children to run, kick balls, hit, throw and catch without getting in another child’s way.
3. Make sure there are enough materials for all children to have a choice of activities.
4. Include sports equipment to support different kinds of physical development. Think about ways to make some of these, to use non-traditional materials for them, or to purchase materials at low cost stores for your outdoor environment.
   a. **Throwing:** balls, frisbees, ring toss, plastic horseshoes, etc.
   b. **Jumping:** jump ropes, hula hoops, chalk and hard surface for hopscotch, etc.
   c. **Hitting:** bats, badminton, handmade racquets, paddles and balls/kooshes, etc.
   d. **Hanging:** monkey bars, tree branches, etc.
   e. **Climbing:** climbing units, ropes with knots, trees, etc.
   f. **Balancing:** balance beams, curbing, painted lines, etc.
   g. **Swinging/sliding:** swings, slides, hammock, etc.

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Remember both the indoor and outdoor environments should be safe and healthy. Monitor and maintain indoor and outdoor environments on a daily basis. Ensure you have a daily health and safety checklist for your school-age classroom and outdoor space that someone (teachers and/or leaders) completes to make sure all materials and equipment are in working order and safe for the children.
# SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN’S INTERESTS AGES 5-12

Children develop and grow at different rates and their abilities and interests may change. But there are some common milestones many children reach from ages 5 to 12. Some of these interests may be enjoyed in mixed age groups as well and are not subject to age group. The following chart can assist you with understanding the different interests of different age groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILDREN’S GENERAL INTERESTS BY AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5-7 YEAR OLDS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Painting and drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Enjoys many activities and stays busy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Practices skills to become better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Jumps rope</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Rides a bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Dramatic play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Prefers to play in small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Preparing snacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Enjoys crafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Dress up and pretend play</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
DAILY ROUTINES FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

School age programs must ensure that their classroom daily routine encourages play, exploration, and learning. Strategies that can be used to ensure this happens are listed below.

- Plan so that routines of the classroom reflect a schedule that is planned to promote a balance of the following activities:
  - Outdoor / Indoor
  - Individual / Small group / Large group
  - Quiet / Active
    - Note: Quiet and active activities need to be offered as a choice. Small groups can gather spontaneously during free choice time or teacher initiated small groups can be planned on the schedule.
  - Child-initiated / Staff-initiated

- Ensure children have an opportunity to complete school work during the school year. Make sure to provide appropriate space and time for this to be completed.

- Teachers should plan smooth transitions between activities, which includes providing children with notice so they are prepared for the change, and minimize waiting between activities.

- Schedule a one-hour free choice time twice a day for full-day programs, and at least one 45-minute free choice time for afterschool programs.

- Teachers follow the routine most of the day, making changes based on children’s interests or needs, and follow the children’s lead, taking advantage of any “teachable moments” as they arise.
### School-Age Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00 – 8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>ARRIVAL/BREAKFAST INDOOR/OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>CLEAN-UP/PREPARE FOR CLASSWORK/ ASSIGNMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>FREE CHOICE/ ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES/ PROJECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – 12:00 a.m.</td>
<td>OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 – 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>QUIET ACTIVITIES / REST (PUZZLES, ARTS/CRAFTS, READING)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 – 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>SNACK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 – 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>OUTSIDE/CLASSWORK ASSISTANCE/PROJECTS/FREE PLAY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LESSON PLANNING

The classroom environment provides the foundation for learning activities, the daily schedule provides the timeframes for activities and routines, and the lesson plan provides the specific activities, materials, and learning goals for the children in the classroom. Lesson plans provide teachers with a tool to use in planning and organizing learning activities. Planning and being prepared for the daily activities increases the likelihood of success in engaging children in activities and reducing challenging behaviors. If the center uses an early childhood curriculum that uses a project or studies and investigations approach, it can be used with school aged children because the projects/studies/investigations can be expanded to become as in-depth and complex as school agers would like and the lesson plan will reflect this work. If the center does not use a curriculum that can be used for school age children, teachers will use the knowledge of their children and their children’s interests to create an appropriate curriculum. School age lesson plans will reflect whichever curriculum is being used.

Ensure that lesson plans reflect developmentally appropriate learning activities which are based on the children’s interests and abilities by developing weekly lesson plans.

When developing lesson plans, make sure they:

- Are complete, current, dated in pen, hanging and visible, and being followed.
- Contain information on activities that are happening in the classroom during the day and materials that are being added to the classroom based on children’s interests or the project/investigation/special activities being explored that week.
- Are developed with the help of the children in the class.
- Include new opportunities for children in some of the following areas each week: arts and crafts, board and table games, books/creative language, construction/blocks, dramatics, math, music and movement, special interests/projects/investigations, science and nature, woodworking and engineering, outdoors.

Teachers are responsible for making sure both the classroom and outdoor environment are prepared for the activities and experiences listed on the lesson plan.

See pages 8-9 of this guide for a Weekly Plan Template for School-Age Children, and page 10 for a Lesson Plan Quick Check to ensure you have a well rounded lesson plan for the week.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrival Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morning Classwork,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrichment, Projects,</td>
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<td>Investigations, or</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afternoon Enrichment,</td>
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<td>Projects, Investigations,</td>
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<tr>
<td>or Special Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor Activities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## School-Age Program Weekly Plan (Full day)

**Week of:** ____________________  **Special Focus/Project/Investigation:** ___________________________

| Changes to The Environment (changes are not required in each area each week) |
|---|---|---|
| Arts and Crafts | Construction and Blocks | Board and Table Games |
| Books/Creative Language | Dramatics | Math |
| Music and Movement | Science and Nature | Woodworking/Engineering |
| Outdoors | Projects/Investigations | Miscellaneous |
### Lesson Planning Quick Check

*Use this to make sure lesson plans are complete and ready to be implemented.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did I observe the children to determine what they can do and what new skills I can introduce to inform my plan for this week?</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have I selected learning objective(s) for the week based on the skills and abilities of the children in the group?</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have I planned learning activities for interest areas, and small group and large group activities based on the selected learning objectives?</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have I added activities and experiences being offered to the lesson plan template?</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have I identified and gathered the resources, materials, and supplies required to implement the activities on the lesson plan?</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have I prepared the new materials for the activities and learning centers on Friday so activities are ready for Monday and the rest of the week?</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I have a plan for evaluating the lesson plan activities being provided during the week and planning for the coming week based on the children’s abilities, interests, and needs?</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

To provide positive behavior guidance, a foundation of trust and respect needs to be established between teachers and children. Providing this foundation is accomplished when teachers establish authentic, trusting relationships with their school age children and provide a warm, nurturing, and positive environment for them throughout each day.

Teachers can do this by:
1. Expressing respect for and attention toward children by smiling and speaking to them at their eye level.
2. Being available to children and encouraging them to talk and share experiences, ideas, and feelings.
3. Having one-to-one interactions with children throughout the day as opposed to speaking to the full group much of the day.
4. Ensuring children feel comfortable, relaxed, happy, and involved in play and other activities.
5. Understanding that conflict is always an opportunity to teach.
6. Being aware of their own emotions, feelings, triggers, and responses to those triggers and knowing how to remain composed or regain their composure when triggered so they can help children resolve conflicts that may arise. Composure information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

With the foundation in place, teachers can provide positive behavior guidance by using the following guidelines:

- Consider implementing appropriate behavior guidance strategies to support children as they interact with each other during routines and activities.
- Be sure to set expectations that are realistic for the age and developmental level of children and redirect children as needed. Set appropriate limits early on to help children control their own impulses and behaviors.
- Be specific about what behavior is expected for different activities and/or procedures.
- Develop rules in conjunction with children and post the rules for children to see. School age children can decide on how to produce and then produce the rule chart to be posted after they have generated the rules with the teacher.
- Use positive encouragement to recognize children’s appropriate behavior. This should be specific to what the child is doing or has done and can be verbal or non-verbal (facial expressions, nodding, positive language).
- Encourage children to resolve their own conflicts in a safe and appropriate manner. Respond to both positive behaviors as well as negative behaviors. Establish a conflict resolution process, teach it to the children, review the process, practice it with children involved as conflicts come up, and provide positive feedback as children attempt to work through the process on their own and when they are successful in completing it.
Resources for Conflict Resolution
- NAEYC Guidance
- CSEFEL Resources and Solution Toolkit
- HighScope Conflict Resolution Poster
- Conscious Discipline - Teaching Conflict Resolution to Young Children
- Teaching Conflict Resolution in 6 Easy Steps

FOOD SERVICE, HEALTH AND HYGIENE WITH SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

FOOD SERVICE GUIDANCE
- Teachers should make sure mealtime is a pleasant social and learning experience for the children.
- Food and allergy charts are posted in a conspicuous place but covered for confidentiality.
- Appropriate feeding practices are in place:
  - After schoolers sit at tables for meals and snacks
  - All children and adults wash their hands following proper procedures before and after eating
  - Proper utensils are provided
  - Food is served in a sanitary way using a plate, placemat, or paper towel and napkins are provided
    - **Tables are washed following proper procedures** before and after eating
- USDA Food Guidelines for school age children are followed

HEALTH AND HYGIENE
- Staff and children wash their hands using soap at least at the following times identified in Louisiana Bulletin 137: upon arrival at the center, before preparing or serving meals, before giving medication, after playing in water used by more than one person, after toileting, after helping a child use a toilet or changing diapers, after wiping noses or cleaning wounds, after handling pets and other animals, after playing in sandboxes, before eating meals or snacks, upon coming in from outdoors, after cleaning or handling garbage and anytime hands become soiled with body fluids, such as urine, saliva, blood or nasal discharge. Proper handwashing procedures are followed (handwashing link here)
- The classroom is clean and there are no noxious odors.
- The classroom has enough soap and paper towels for the children in the classroom
- During the COVID 19 pandemic, teachers must always follow the state-mandated health and hygiene guidelines.
REFERENCES


“Developmental Characteristics and Interests of School-Age Children”. Lawrence University.


“NASA* Standards for Quality School-Age Programs (Standards at a Glance)”. National Afterschool Association.


“Observations for Quality School-Age Care & Programming”. Lisa St. Clair, Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center, a University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research and Services. 2004.


SACERS Info For classrooms serving children 5 to 12 years

“SACERS Technical Assistance Papers Paper #1: EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-AGE ENVIRONMENTS”.

School Age Activity Ideas

“School-Age PQA”. David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality: A division of the Forum for Youth Investment. Updated June, 2018


Supervision definition per Louisiana Bulletin 137 – Early Learning Sites Licensing Regulations as of 5.5.2020.

