

Child Care Today

Child Care Applications: Enrichment Activities—Early Childhood Care & Education

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Enrichment

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Looking at the Classifieds

Critical Thinking Skill: Recognizing Propaganda. If you have ever convinced your parents to let you buy an expensive shirt or go to a party, you were using propaganda. *Propaganda* is a tactic used to shape beliefs and persuade people to follow certain courses of action. Although most people think of propaganda as a bad thing, it can be used for good purposes, such as to convince teenagers to avoid using drugs. Some common forms of propaganda include:

- Persuasion.
- Speaking in generalities.
- Testimonials.
- Using ideas that people feel strongly about, such as patriotism, justice, love, or peace.
- Claims that sound too good to be true.

Directions: Read the following classified ads. On the lines provided, list the propaganda tactics used in each one. Then suggest important information that the ad leaves out or about which it is unclear.

Ad #1: Do you love children? Do you want to make new friends? Come work for us! Earn up to \$30/hr. Flexible hours, part-time. TEACHtoy Parties, 777-7777.

Ad #2: Teachers: Waiting to be licensed but need work? Work as a temporary aide at a child care center. Immediate start. Call TEMPORARY TEACHERS, 555-4321.

Ad #3: DREAM JOB as a live-in nanny! Care for our charming young boys! Swimming pool, own room and bath, \$300/week plus benefits. Possible travel to Europe with our family in October. Must own car. Age or lack of training no barrier, just need to love kids. 555-5678.

Is an Early Childhood Career for You?



Critical Thinking Skill: Drawing Conclusions.

Directions: Read and respond to each of the questions listed below. Then determine whether a career as an early childhood professional is a possibility for you.

1. Why do you want to work with children? Identify at least six reasons.

2. What skills and abilities do you have that are especially suited to an early childhood career?

3. How involved would you like to be with children? _____

4. Based on your answers to the previous questions, for which early childhood careers might you best be suited?

Enrichment

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Values & Professionalism

Critical Thinking Skill: Recognizing Values. Values are beliefs and feelings about what is important. They are based on ideas about what is right, good, and desirable. Strong values help guide you as you make decisions about your actions. They also direct you as you make plans and set goals for your future. An early childhood professional's values should reflect the standards of the profession: objectivity, confidentiality, honesty, responsibility, and respectability.

Directions: Read each of the following situations. On the lines provided, tell how the person should respond to best demonstrate the values of the early childhood profession. Also identify the values that the individual in each situation might be acting on.

1. A job that Clement very much wants requires three years of experience working in child care. Clement, however, has only two and a half years of experience. He is tempted to change the starting date of the first job on his résumé to qualify for the new job. His supervisor from his first job is also Clement's friend, and Clement does not think she would tell anyone.

2. Helen works in an after-school program. The center closes at 6:00 p.m. The parents of eight-year-old Bradley, however, are frequently late; sometimes they do not pick him up until almost 6:30 p.m. Because Bradley is in her class, Helen is usually the one who waits with him until his parents arrive. She has spoken to them often about this situation to no avail. Tonight Helen has a meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m. It is now 6:20 p.m. and Bradley is still waiting for his ride. The janitorial staff is starting to clean the classrooms, and Helen wonders if she could leave Bradley with them.

3. Tom and Marissa were both recently hired as teacher assistants at Sunnyside Child Care. They are becoming friends. Tom has noticed, however, that Marissa lacks patience and often yells at the children. One morning, he saw her shake a child who was misbehaving. Marissa pleaded with Tom not to tell their supervisor; she promised to never shake a child again.

Identifying Professional Skills



Critical Thinking Skill: Contrasting.

Directions: Below are the typical daily schedules of two students interested in becoming early childhood professionals. Each student has a part-time job at an early childhood center. Read each schedule and then contrast them by answering the questions that follow. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Allison		Kent	
7:30 a.m.	Get up	7:00 a.m.	Get up
7:45–8:30 a.m.	Eat breakfast; finish homework for morning classes	7:15–8:15 a.m.	Eat breakfast, make lunch, review homework
8:45–11:45 a.m.	Morning classes	8:45–11:45 a.m.	Morning classes
11:45 a.m.– 12:45 p.m.	Eat lunch; do homework for afternoon classes	11:45 a.m.– 12:45 p.m.	Eat lunch; review notes from morning classes
12:45–3:30 p.m.	Afternoon classes	12:45–3:30 p.m.	Afternoon classes
4:00 p.m.	Arrive to volunteer at child care center	4:00–5:30 p.m.	Arrive to volunteer at child care center; conduct activities with children
4:00–4:30 p.m.	Prepare activities for children	6:00–7:00 p.m.	Arrive home; help with dinner preparation and eat with family
4:30–5:30 p.m.	Conduct activities	7:00–9:00 p.m.	Do homework
6:00 p.m.	Pick up dinner at fast food restaurant	9:00–9:30 p.m.	Plan next day’s activities for child care center
6:30–8:30 p.m.	Go out with friends	9:30–11:00 p.m.	Read; watch television
8:30–9:30 p.m.	Watch television	11:00 p.m.	Go to bed
9:30–10:30 p.m.	Do homework		
11:00 p.m.	Go to bed		

1. Which student is better at time management? Explain.
2. Which student do you think is in better physical and emotional health? Explain.
3. Which student exhibits effective professional skills? Explain.
4. If you were a director of a child care center, which student would you want on staff? Why?
5. How does your daily schedule compare to either of the examples? What improvements might you make in how you manage time?

Enrichment

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Assumptions About Early Childhood Programs

Critical Thinking Skill: Recognizing Assumptions. An assumption is anything taken for granted or accepted as true. Assumptions can be either correct or incorrect.

Directions: The following views contain assumptions about certain types of early childhood programs. Identify the assumptions in each one and write them on the lines provided. Tell whether the assumptions are correct or incorrect.

1. **Blake:** "I'm going to be working as an aide in a Head Start classroom. I'm a little disappointed because I know that since the children are from low-income families, they are all slow learners. I would prefer to work with children who have above average intelligence."

2. **Garrett:** "My plan is to become a Montessori teacher. One reason I want to teach in a Montessori school is that the teachers have to do less work. Another is that the children at Montessori schools are all bright and self-motivated."

3. **Linda:** "I want to work with children who are at risk of academic failure. That's more challenging than working with academically average students. It's more difficult because most of these children have other problems, like poverty or learning disabilities. Also, a lot of programs for children 'at-risk' are publicly funded, so the pay will probably be lower."

Avoiding False Logic

*Enrichment***6**

Critical Thinking Skill: Recognizing Fallacies in Logic. The more people are concerned about or interested in an issue, the more prone they are to believing misconceptions and unproven theories about it. This is certainly true of AIDS, or *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*, a deadly disease that hinders the body's ability to protect itself from pathogens. HIV, or *human immunodeficiency virus*, is the virus that causes AIDS. A growing number of children are born with HIV or contract it in other ways. Thus it is more and more likely that an HIV-infected child will be enrolled in an early childhood program. HIV is a contagious disease, but there are many untruths circulating about how it is spread.

Directions: Complete each part of the activity as directed.

A. Take the following self-quiz. Write “+” in the blank beside each true statement and “0” beside each false statement. Check your answers with the help of your instructor.

- _____ 1. Viruses that cause the common cold and the HIV virus are spread in the same way.
- _____ 2. A child could contract HIV if bitten by a mosquito that had previously bitten an HIV-infected person.
- _____ 3. A child could contract HIV if he or she uses a fork or spoon used by an HIV-infected child.
- _____ 4. An HIV-infected mother can pass the virus to her baby before or during birth.
- _____ 5. HIV is spread through exposure to infected blood.
- _____ 6. HIV can be spread by playing together, hugging, holding hands, or kissing.
- _____ 7. HIV could be spread through the tears of an infected child.
- _____ 8. A baby could receive HIV while breast-feeding if the mother is infected.
- _____ 9. HIV could be spread if two children prick their fingers and hold them together to become “blood” brothers or sisters, but only if one child is HIV-infected.
- _____ 10. A child could contract HIV by using the same toilet as an HIV-infected person.

B. Review the facts you have learned from taking this quiz. Then respond to the questions listed below. Write your responses on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why do you think fallacies such as these exist? What makes people believe as they do?
2. Use the information you have learned to write a paragraph telling how you would provide care for an HIV-infected child at an early childhood care or education center. What, if any, special precautions would you make? What practices would you encourage or discourage? How would you educate other children or parents who have concerns about AIDS?

Building Up or Tearing Down?

Critical Thinking Skill: Assessing Outcomes.

Directions: Read each situation below. Assess whether the outcome of each incident builds up or tears down the child’s self-esteem. Then explain your response.

1. Three-year-old Bethany, who is learning toileting skills, tells a child care professional that she has to go to the bathroom. The care professional says, “I’m glad you told me, Bethany. You’re getting very good at taking care of yourself.”

2. Hung is a second grader new to the United States who cannot read English yet. She avoids opportunities to read at the after-school program for fear she will be embarrassed. One day, one of the childhood professionals at the after-school program is determined that Hung will read. She gives Hung a second-grade level reading book about rocks and tells Hung she cannot play until she has read the book aloud.

3. Preston is in a wheelchair and often feels left out when the children play in the play yard. Occasionally, Preston’s teacher lifts him out of his chair and places him onto an adapted swing next to the play yard’s swing set. As she gives him a push, the teacher says, “Hang on, Preston. Now you are swinging just like the other children.”

Infant Caregiver Report Forms: Clear or Unclear?

Enrichment

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Critical Thinking Skill: Identifying Ambiguous Statements. An ambiguous statement is one that is obscure or possibly understood in more than one way.

Directions: The following Infant Caregiver Report Form was filled out by a student in an occupational child care program. Many of the statements are ambiguous or unclear. Cross out the ambiguous statements and rewrite them in the space provided so that they are clear, complete, and easy to understand.

Infant Caregiver Report Form for Amy, Age 10 Months, on July 15

1. Amount of liquid and solid food served: Six servings.

2. Amount of liquid and solid food consumed: Four servings.

3. Number of diapers changed: Amy was changed four times today.

4. Number and consistency of bowel movements: Amy had three bowel movements.

5. Length and quality of nap: Amy participated in nap time.

6. Accidents and treatment provided: It appears that Amy may have scraped her knee during active play.

7. Signs of illness and medicine given: None.

8. Infant's overall mood and activity level: The usual.



Communicating with Children: Clear or Unclear?

Critical Thinking Skill: Identifying Ambiguous Statements.

Directions: The following responses in italic type were given by child care students to questions preschool children asked about nature. In the lines after each answer, indicate which answers are ambiguous (vague, unclear, or lacking detail). Then rewrite the ambiguous answers in the space provided to make them clear to children. Use additional paper for your answers if necessary.

1. Why do spiders build webs? *To live in.* _____

2. Do butterflies die? *Yes, butterflies die. They live less than a year, but they leave tiny eggs behind that will grow into new butterflies.* _____

3. What do baby goats eat? *Milk.* _____ Where do they get milk? *Their mothers give it to them.* _____

4. Is a rock alive? *A rock is not alive. It doesn't need water, food, or sunlight. It does not grow.* _____

5. Is a snowstorm dangerous? *Not if you know what to do.* _____

6. Why do leaves change color in the fall? *They're dying and drying up.* _____

7. How can paper be made from trees? *Chips of wood are cooked and cooked until they become soft and mushy like oatmeal. The mush is spread out in a very thin layer to dry.* _____

Promoting Acceptance of Cultural Diversity



Critical Thinking Skill: Recognizing Points of View.

Directions: Assume the child care center at which you work includes children from various cultures. For many children, this may be their first experience outside the family culture or with people from other cultures. As a childhood care professional you can set an example for cultural acceptance at your center. Explain in the space provided how you would respond to the following situations.

1. Seven-year-old Garret recently moved to the United States from England with his parents. Although Garret and the other children at your center speak English, you and the children have noticed some differences in word usage. There was some confusion one day at lunch when Garret asked for a “serviette” (napkin) during lunch. Later the same day, he asked where the “dustbin” (garbage can) was to dispose of some paper scraps. Several of the children began chuckling over Garret’s word usage.

2. Madhur, a four-year-old girl at your center, recently moved to the United States from India with her family. Madhur’s mother wears a traditional sari (sahr-ee), a garment that is made from several yards of fabric and draped so that one end forms a skirt and the other a head or shoulder covering. Some of the children have begun to ask questions about her mother’s garment.

3. Nori rolls (cold rice wrapped in seaweed) are a typical lunch food for Kimi, a Japanese girl who is in your room at the center. Lately you notice some of the children make fun of the food Kimi brings to eat.

Choosing Appropriate Cultural Items

Critical Thinking Skill: Recognizing Bias. People in the mainstream culture often do not recognize images or ideas that others consider biased, inaccurate, or offensive. These individuals may need to thoughtfully reconsider items or practices that have become part of the culture.

Directions: Evaluate the following cultural items for inclusion in an early childhood classroom. As part of your evaluation, investigate factors about each culture. As you do so, write your answers to the following questions for each item in the space provided.

- Does this item accurately depict the culture? Why or why not?
- Would you feel good about having the item in the classroom if you were of that ethnic origin? Why?
- Would you include the item in your classroom in the future? Why?

1. A Norwegian doll in native costume. _____

2. A reproduction of a poster from the 1700s depicting a Native American village. _____

3. A collage of pictures of ethnic Americans. _____

4. A variety of baskets, rice bowls, pottery, chopsticks, saris, grass skirts, moccasins, berets, tunics, and clogs in a dramatic play center.

Keeping Children Safe



Critical Thinking Skill: Predicting Consequences. The ability to predict consequences is a valuable skill for keeping children safe. Recognizing factors that are likely to lead to injury or illness is a key to prevention.

Directions: Consider the possible consequences regarding children's safety for each of the following situations. Predict the consequences for each situation and explain what could be done to make it safe. Write your answers in the space provided. Use additional paper if necessary.

1. The Lawndale Preschool is building its new play yard near a busy street. _____

2. A parent, Sheryl, notices the electrical outlets in the preschool her son attends are uncapped and accessible to the children.

3. Marcus recently purchased large marbles for an early childhood center that provides care for children ages two to six years.

4. Elena plans to serve hot dogs and grapes at a picnic for two- and three-year-olds at the child care center at which she works.

5. Levi, the custodian at the Shenandoah Preschool, keeps his cleaning supplies under the restroom sink.

6. Salina uses pudding as finger paint with the toddlers in her classroom. _____

Child Care for Children Who Are Ill

Critical Thinking Skill: Recognizing Alternatives.

Directions: Assume you are planning a child care center for children who are ill. Consider the needs of the children and their parents. How might you meet these needs for each category below? Write your answers in the space provided. Use additional paper if necessary.

1. What hours of operation would your center provide? Why? _____

2. How many staff members might you need? What qualifications should they have to care for children who are ill?

3. What space requirements are necessary? How might you maintain sanitary, yet cheerful, conditions?

4. How would you structure the daily schedule? What types of activities might be appropriate for children who are ill?

5. How might food needs vary for children who are ill? What types of foods might you serve?

6. What types of records related to ill children would you require staff to keep? What state guidelines influence how medications are stored and administered?

Observing Behavior



Critical Thinking Skill: Identifying Evidence.

Directions: The descriptions below are observations of two young children, followed by a teacher's conclusion based on the observations. For each description, identify the evidence that supports the conclusion and write it in the space provided.

1. Jana, a five-year-old in preschool, says very few words and even fewer two-word sentences. She often becomes frustrated when her early childhood teacher fails to understand her garbled words. During an activity that involved farm animals, Jana was unable to clearly say the names of the animals, although it was obvious to the child care professional that Jana knew each animal.

Conclusion: Jana may have a hearing problem that impairs her speech or a language delay.

Supporting evidence: _____

2. Christopher is a four-year-old in preschool. He still wears a diaper to school since he has not been totally successful at toileting. When he is engrossed in play, Christopher will often soil his pants rather than ask to be taken to the restroom. He resists using the restroom even at regularly scheduled times before snacks and meals.

Conclusion: Christopher's toileting training is delayed. His resistance to use the toilet seems to be developing into a power struggle between what teachers want and what he wants.

Supporting evidence: _____

Guiding the Behavior of Children

Critical Thinking Skill: Analyzing Decisions.

Directions: Below are several situations frequently encountered in an early childhood setting. Read each situation and decide whether you agree or disagree with the childhood professional's reactions. If you agree, tell why. If you disagree, tell why and offer an alternative way for dealing with the child's behavior. Write your answers in the space provided. Use additional paper for your answers, if necessary.

1. At every opportunity he can find, Robert likes to feed the fish in the preschool's aquarium. Worried that he would overfeed and kill the fish, Robert's teacher removed the fish food from its location next to the tank. Now he keeps it locked in a closet and gives it to Robert only when the fish need to be fed.

2. Camille is a bright and talented school-age child, easily bored with the regular routine. Looking for diversion, she often bothers the other students. She "helps" them with their homework and "improves" their art projects. When the other children start to cry or complain, Camille's teacher sends her to the director's office.

3. The children at Melinda's family child care home enjoy drawing on her patio with chalk. Melinda has one piece of chalk in each color, which often leads to fights over who gets to use each color first. When the children start fighting, Melinda takes the chalk away and tells them they may no longer draw on the patio.

4. Although Conrad loves to play in the block area, he is not very good at putting the blocks away. Today Conrad was told twice to pick up the blocks but still did not do so. Conrad's teacher told him that he would not be allowed to play with the blocks tomorrow.

Identifying Age Preferences



Critical Thinking Skill: Contrasting.

Directions: To get a clearer picture of which age group with which you prefer to work—infant, toddler, preschool, or school-age—complete the chart below. Make a list of at least four age-appropriate activities per age group. Identify any special challenges associated with the age group or the activities. Write your activities and challenges in the appropriate boxes in the chart.

Age Group	Activities	Special Challenges
Infants (Birth to 12 months)		
Toddlers (12 to 36 months)		
Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)		
School-agers (6 to 12 years)		

Your Decision. Contrast the activities and special challenges for each age group. Based on the types of activities and challenges, along with your interests and abilities, with which age group might you prefer to work? Why? Explain your decision in the space provided. Use additional paper if necessary.

Encouraging Verbal Skills

Critical Thinking Skill: Recognizing Alternatives.

Directions: Cassandra wants to encourage preschool children to develop verbal skills. She wrote the following questions to ask the children, hoping the questions would stimulate them to talk. When she was finished, though, Cassandra realized that all of her questions required only a yes-or-no response. Rewrite her questions in the space provided, phrasing them in such a way that would encourage children to talk about a certain idea or experience. The first question has been completed for you as an example.

1. Would you enjoy going to the moon? *What do you think it would be like to walk on the moon?*

2. Did you think *The Cat in the Hat*, by Dr. Seuss, was funny? _____

3. Have you ever gone to the beach? _____

4. Did you like learning the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" song? _____

5. Are you building a barn with these blocks? _____

6. Would you like to have a pet zebra? _____

7. Did you think the snack was tasty? _____

8. Is your favorite food pizza? _____

Working with Toddlers



Critical Thinking Skill: Solving Problems.

Directions: Assume you are a toddler care professional in each of the situations described below. Identify the developmental characteristic occurring in each situation. Then explain how you might respond to each of the situations in the space provided. Use additional paper if necessary.

1. Thunder booms across the sky as heavy rain begins to hit the roof of the early childhood center. Anna is frightened and begins to scream for her mother.

2. After struggling to put on his jacket and hat for several minutes, Kevin walked away from his cubby with a big smile. He was very proud that he was able to put on his jacket and hat—and zip up his jacket.

3. As you are reading a lengthy story to six toddlers, Antonio and Bo walk away from the circle and begin to play in the block center. When you ask them to return to the story circle, they both shout, "No!"

4. While observing the dramatic play center, you notice Shaundra is carrying on a conversation with someone she calls "Hurry." There are no other children playing in the dramatic play center.

5. Carlos cries when a parent, dressed as a clown, visits the early childhood center.

Toddler Challenges

Critical Thinking Skill: Solving Problems.

Directions: Assume you are an early childhood professional who works with toddlers. Explain how you would solve each of the following problems involving toddlers using the space provided. Use additional paper if necessary.

1. Gaby is 18 months old. Often, when her father drops her off at the early childhood center, Gaby begins screaming and crying. She stretches out her hands toward the door by which he left. You know she is unhappy to see him go. What can you do?

2. You know that 25-month-old Andy is prone to biting, especially when he has to wait for something that he wants. You are about to serve crackers with peanut butter, his favorite snack, to him and eight other toddlers in the class. Andy begins to grow anxious for his snack, but you still have to spread the peanut butter on the crackers. How might you handle this situation so that Andy does not begin biting one of the other children?

3. Thirty-month-old Cornelia crumples to the floor in a temper tantrum whenever she does not get her way. You have taken your group of toddlers to the playground at a park one block away from the center. You just told Cornelia that it is another child's turn on the swings. Cornelia screams, slumps to the ground, and pounds her fists in the sand. When you try to pick her up, she screams harder and starts to kick. What should you do?

Trust Versus Mistrust



Critical Thinking Skill: Identifying Cause and Effect.

Directions: Read each situation and explain whether the early childhood professional’s response might lead the infant to trust or mistrust his or her world. Then explain why in the space provided. Use additional paper if necessary.

1. Melissa, a family child care professional, took the two infants—Kent and Samantha—and one preschooler—Jennifer—she cares for to a local park for an outing. She remembered to bring the stroller, snacks, and beverages but forgot the younger infant’s sweater and extra diapers for all of the children. Soon after they got to the park, Kent soiled his diaper and began to fuss. Melissa talked to Kent, saying such things as, “Why did you have to dirty your diaper? You are just going to have to wait to be changed until we get back to the house—the rest of us want to enjoy the park for a while.” Melissa proceeded to push Jennifer on a swing, while the infants watched from the stroller. Kent continued to whimper.

2. Mattie is a caregiver for a six-month-old infant, Mia. Mia spends most of her waking hours in a playpen. Mia often cries, but Mattie ignores her, believing that crying is good for a baby’s lungs. She does not want Mia to depend on being held all the time.

3. Josh—a 10-month-old infant—was recently enrolled at the Sunnyvale Child Care Center when his mother went back to work. He is very attached to his mother and cries around strangers. After several moments of intense crying during arrival time, Kendra—one of the child care professionals—took Josh from his mother, so she could get to work on time. Kendra tried to console Josh, but when she did, he began to cry harder. Kendra took Josh back to his cubby and talked to him soothingly, saying, “Your mom will be back later. Here is her picture for you to look at whenever you want.” Kendra pointed to a picture of Josh and his mother. Kendra continued to talk soothingly to Josh as she carried him over to the block center. Soon Josh was down on the floor playing with the colorful blocks.

Two Views on Teaching Toileting

Critical Thinking Skill: Determining the Credibility of a Source.

Directions: Two different views on teaching toileting skills are presented below. Read each view. Then determine which person appears to be more credible by answering the questions that follow the scenarios. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Shireen. “With the parents’ permission, I start teaching toileting skills to the children I care for after their first birthday. That is the best age. You have to start early because it takes them at least a year to learn. I have found that most parents are eager to be out of the diaper stage with their children, so I try to help.

“Several times a day, I set the children on the potty chair. I have them sit there until they urinate. Sometimes they have an accident and urinate on the floor. When I have them help clean up the urine, they are more likely to remember to use the potty chair the next time.

“The children in my care can generally use the toilet successfully by age two. Another family day care friend of mine had all of her children using the toilet when they were one and a half. I thought that was pretty impressive.”

Rita. “Through my experience in child care, I’ve noticed that the average age for reaching toileting control is about two and a half for day control and a few months later for night control. I can tell that the children are physically ready when they walk well and dress themselves. Noticing that they have a regular time pattern for urinating or having a bowel movement is another sign. Mentally, children are ready when they understand that urine and stools come from their body. Sometimes children show that they really want to learn about toileting. The parents share their observations with me before we actually decide to start.

“Beginning when the child is in a positive mood helps. I start by placing a potty chair in the restroom and inviting the child to use it if he or she wants to. I do not expect any results at first. When I notice signs that a child is about to have a bowel movement, I place the child on the potty chair. This seems to be the best way to build the child’s interest.

“If I could give all parents one piece of advice as we teach toileting skills, it would be ‘expect accidents and do not punish mistakes.’ ”

1. In general, which person appears more qualified to give information on teaching toileting skills? Explain your answer.
2. For each source, identify signs of emotion, opinion, or exaggeration. Explain how these factors affect each source’s credibility.
 - A. Shireen
 - B. Rita
3. Check other sources, such as child care books or periodicals from the library or search the Internet for resources for information on teaching toileting. Whose view do they support? Why?

Competition & School-Age Children

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Critical Thinking Skill: Making Inferences. The observable facts of a situation sometimes allow you to make a judgment about it. Reaching a conclusion based on observations is called making an inference. The more details you have available, the more likely your inference will be correct.

Directions: The following passages describe competitive situations involving children ages 6 to 12 years. In one, the competition is reasonable and beneficial to children; in the other, it is excessive and unbeneficial. From the details described in each passage, infer whether the competition is beneficial or unbeneficial in the space provided. Then rewrite the unbeneficial competition as beneficial and reasonable in the space provided. Use additional paper if necessary.

- A. Arlene is a child care professional in an after-school program. She loves sports and is on the softball team at the community college she attends. Each afternoon, she pitches to all the children as they play softball. Arlene divides the children into teams of mostly equal ability. Some of the children strike out every time at bat and never catch the ball. Arlene posts the daily scores and also keeps track of each child's performance in the areas of hits, strikes, and catches.
- B. Jerome works at a child care center where he helps school-age children with their homework. When he discovered that many of the children did not know their multiplication and division tables, he made flash cards and a chart and then divided the children into teams of equal abilities. After each team is shown a flash card, they give an answer. The team with the most correct answers each day receives a star on the chart. After two weeks of playing, each team has about the same number of stars on the chart.

1. Which passage describes unbeneficial competition? _____

2. Rewrite the unbeneficial competition as beneficial competition for children.

Enrichment

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Planning Healthful Snacks

Critical Thinking Skill: Applying Knowledge.

Directions: Assume you have been asked to plan the morning and afternoon snacks for one week at the preschool where you work. Use what you have learned about good nutrition and food safety to make healthful choices. Complete the following chart by planning the snacks and identifying the nutritive value of these snacks. Check classroom and library resources or the Internet for specific nutrition information.

Day	Morning Snack	Afternoon Snack	Nutritional Contribution
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

Motor Skill Development



Critical Thinking Skill: Assessing Outcomes.

Directions: Ask two three-year-olds and two five-year-olds to try the following activities. Describe the performance of each age group in the appropriate column. Then answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper.

Activity	Three-year-olds	Five-year-olds
1. Throwing and catching a large, soft ball.		
2. Learning a rhythm-and-song game, such as “Hokey Pokey” or “London Bridge.”		
3. Running a short race.		
4. Skipping, hopping, and galloping.		
5. Walking on a long, low balance beam.		
6. Climbing on a piece of climbing equipment in a play yard.		

7. How did the motor abilities of the three-year-olds differ from those of the five-year-olds for each activity?
8. How might knowing this information affect the way you interact with and plan activities for children of various age levels?

Active Play: Facts & Opinions

Critical Thinking Skill: Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion. When an opinion is long held and widely accepted, it carries the weight of fact with many people. While some opinions are accurate, mistaking an inaccurate opinion for a fact can be limiting or unsafe in some situations.

Directions: People have differing opinions about active play and who should participate in it. Some opinions limit children’s active experiences. Read each statement and decide whether it states a fact or an opinion. Write “F” for fact and “O” for opinion in the space to the left of each number. Rewrite each opinion to state a fact on the lines provided.

- _____ 1. Children who have asthma cannot participate in active play.

- _____ 2. Little ladies do not get their dresses and shoes dirty.

- _____ 3. Children who engage in active play are establishing a healthy pattern for their adult years.

- _____ 4. Tough boys do not become ballet dancers.

- _____ 5. Children actually need space in which to run and play freely.

- _____ 6. Figure skating is easier than playing hockey.

- _____ 7. Physical play can relieve emotional and mental stress.

- _____ 8. The best way to teach children to swim is to throw them in the water so their instincts will take over.

- _____ 9. Active play has a positive effect on the body’s immune system.

- _____ 10. Children with physical disabilities should avoid active play.

Analyzing Dramatic Play

Enrichment

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Critical Thinking Skill: Making Inferences.

Directions: Assume you are a childhood professional at a child care center. As part of your job, you are to help analyze the anecdotal records that have been kept on children who participate in the dramatic play center. While reviewing the anecdotal records, you discover several that are troublesome. Analyze the situations that follow and infer possible underlying reasons why the children acted as they did. Offer a suggestion for how you might deal with each situation. Write your answers in the space provided.

1. Lesley, Tommy, and Jorgé were playing together in the dramatic play center. "Let's play fire-fighters," said Tommy. "I get to be the fire chief," said Lesley. "No, you can't," chanted Tommy and Jorgé simultaneously. "A girl can't be a fire chief." "I get to be the chief just like I always am," responded Tommy. Jorgé frowned.

2. Four-year-old Jonah was rocking a baby doll while sitting in a child-size rocking chair in the dramatic play center. He said, "There, there, baby. Don't cry." Jonah continued to rock the baby for several more minutes. Suddenly, he screamed while shaking the baby doll, "I can't take it any more. Stop crying or I'll spank you!"

3. Anna was playing alone with several dolls in the dramatic play center. She was pretending to be a dentist, and the dolls were her patients. Anna said, "This isn't going to hurt a bit," as she pretended to drill multiple holes in the faces of several dolls.

Age-Appropriate Art Activities

Critical Thinking Skill: Analyzing Decisions.

Directions: Below are two pairs of art activities. One pair of activities is planned for three- to five-year-olds; the other is planned for six- to eight-year-olds. One activity from each pair is appropriate for the age group; the other is not. Read the activities and identify the activities that are not age appropriate in the space provided. Rewrite the inappropriate activities to make them age appropriate in the space provided.

Ages Three to Five

- A. Each child will be given crayons in an array of colors and a sheet from a coloring book about pets. The children will be asked to color their picture for display in the classroom.
- B. Children will make necklaces, bracelets, or belts by stringing beads of assorted shapes, colors, and sizes on a shoestring.

1. Which activity is not appropriate? _____
2. Rewrite the activity here. _____

Ages Six to Eight

- C. Children will learn about kites from a video. They will be given various art supplies and whatever guidance they request to make their own kites. The weather permitting, they will have an opportunity to fly their kites at a nearby park.
- D. Two children will decorate a six-foot bulletin board. They will think of a theme, decide what materials to use, and complete the project on their own. They will have three days to complete the bulletin board project.

3. Which activity is not appropriate? _____
4. Rewrite the activity here. _____

Finding Solutions to Meet Special Needs

Enrichment
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Critical Thinking Skill: Solving Problems.

Directions: The situations that follow describe challenges that can arise when inclusion is practiced in an early childhood center. Read each situation and determine the least restrictive environment to meet the needs of each child. Choose a solution that will have a positive impact on the children involved. Write your solutions and explain the impact of your answers in the space provided.

1. The table at which the preschool class eats meals is too low to accommodate Kara's wheelchair. She cannot get close enough to reach her plate.

Solution: _____

Impact: _____

2. Joey is hearing impaired. He cannot hear many of the audio transition signals that are used at his preschool program.

Solution: _____

Impact: _____

3. Mandy is visually impaired. Although she has some vision, she is continually bumping into chairs, toys, and other objects that are in her way.

Solution: _____

Impact: _____

4. Ever since Barry, who has cerebral palsy, enrolled in the preschool, four-year-old Darla has avoided him. Her facial expressions and actions reveal negative feelings about Barry.

Solution: _____

Impact: _____

**Self-evaluation Form:
Early Childhood Teacher**

Critical Thinking Skill: Evaluating.

Directions: Evaluate your teaching abilities using this form. To the left of each characteristic listed below, write a “W” if you are working on it, “M” if you do it most of the time, “S” if you do it sometimes, or “A” if you do it always. After you have completed this, review items marked “W” for working on, “M” for most of the time, and “S” for sometimes. Make a plan for developing those characteristics into “A” for always.

Program Relationships with Staff and Families

_____ I greet children, parents, and staff with a friendly, positive attitude and pleasant manner.

_____ I accept suggestions and criticism from my coworkers gracefully.

_____ I make an effort to be sensitive to the needs of the children, parents, and coworkers.

_____ I am willing to share my ideas and plans so that I can contribute to the total program.

_____ I am eager to recognize the success and accomplishments of coworkers.

_____ I maintain professional relationships with staff as well as child care clients.

Curriculum and Environment

_____ I have a classroom that is organized, reflects family diversity, and is developmentally appropriate for children.

_____ I am aware of each child’s developmental stage and plan according to their varying needs.

_____ I maintain a portfolio of children’s development for documenting and assessment.

_____ I plan activities and create learning centers that address a wide variety of learning styles.

_____ For those interested, I include parents in curriculum planning or classroom design.

_____ I utilize the outdoor play space for teaching and learning as well as indoor space.

_____ I have and abide by a predictable daily schedule that offers a balance of activities, routines, and types of play for children’s overall development.

_____ I plan a balanced curriculum that nurtures emotional, social, intellectual, and physical development.

_____ I am organized and have a plan for each day, but also make the most of spontaneous “teachable moments.”

_____ I maintain a classroom that is family-friendly and ready to include parents.

(Continued on next page)

Classroom Behavior Management

- _____ I promote each child’s confidence and good self-esteem.
- _____ I use positive means of discipline and guidance.
- _____ When faced with a child’s challenging behavior, I cooperatively problem solve with parents and other teachers to find respectful and reasonable remedies.
- _____ I document types and frequency of challenging behaviors to determine if specialized help is needed for a child’s continued development.

Professionalism

- _____ I attend work regularly, am punctual, and use sick leave appropriately.
- _____ I am aware of my responsibility to report suspected cases of child neglect or abuse.
- _____ I abide by the policies and procedures of my program.
- _____ I do not gossip about fellow staff, families, or enrolled children.
- _____ I assume my share of joint responsibilities.
- _____ I participate in “after hours” program events and activities in addition to my regular hours.
- _____ I participate in continuing education opportunities to increase my knowledge and develop new competencies.
- _____ I am prepared to give families timely referrals when needs are indicated.

Personal Qualities

- _____ I present a professional attitude in my hygiene, appearance, dress, and speech.
- _____ I maintain good physical and mental health.
- _____ I maintain a positive attitude and enthusiasm toward my job.
- _____ I enjoy working with children as well as with adults.

My Teaching Team

- _____ I share teaching and caregiving responsibilities equally with coworkers.
- _____ I work to include varied teaching and caring skills in the classroom.
- _____ I openly discuss items of disagreement and seek consensus and positive mutual problem solving.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Early Childhood Teacher Performance Evaluation Form

Critical Thinking: Evaluating.

Directions: Review criteria below. For each category, think of additional criteria you believe would be important to review when evaluating an early childhood professional's teaching performance.

Staff Member Name _____ Date: _____

Classroom Assignment: _____ Evaluator's name: _____

Assessment code: **A** for achieved, **P** for partly achieved, **N** for not evident

Personal Qualities and Work Ethic

_____ Maintains a professional appearance and positive, respectful attitude

_____ Maintains on-time and regular work attendance and ethically uses sick leave

_____ Avoids gossip and expects others to do the same

_____ Eagerly shares unique talents and encourages coworkers to do the same

Teaching Abilities

_____ Is a good role model for children, coworkers, and program parents

_____ Implements an integrated, play-based, hands-on curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and respectful of diversity

_____ Individualizes teaching for children with varying learning styles

_____ Nurtures development of all children's emotional, social, intellectual, and physical skills

_____ Maintains a predictable schedule that incorporates varied play and learning activities as well as daily routines, such as toileting, nap time, and meal service

_____ Uses positive discipline and guidance techniques for classroom management as well as a teaching opportunity

_____ Plans adequately and implements plans to meet daily goals

_____ Includes a wide variety of curriculum areas in activity plans, such as art, science, math, literacy, block building, woodworking, sand and water play, gardening, active games, and movement

_____ Nurtures children's curiosity by making the most of spontaneous "teachable moments"

_____ Likes children, is warm and caring, and consistently enthusiastic with them

(Continued on next page)

Indoor and Outdoor Classroom Environment

- _____ All spaces, equipment, and play materials are regularly cleaned, organized, and checked for safety
- _____ Classroom furnishing arrangements and décor is family-friendly and reflects diversity of children enrolled
- _____ Classroom atmosphere is welcoming and promotes children’s sense of safety, security, and stability
- _____ Learning centers are varied and allow for small group or individual play
- _____ Learning activities take place both inside and outside
- _____ Unsafe equipment or conditions are reported immediately for repair or removal

Coworker Relationships

- _____ Shares pertinent information about children and families with fellow staff in a timely manner
- _____ Shares classroom upkeep and management duties equally
- _____ Accepts feedback and constructive criticism from coworkers
- _____ Maintains a positive attitude, even in the face of change

Family Interactions

- _____ Is respectful to all family members and learns about each family’s culture
- _____ Keeps family information confidential
- _____ Involves families in classroom activities and environment design
- _____ Conducts parent conferences effectively
- _____ Provides timely, accurate referrals as needed

Professionalism and Continued Development

- _____ Is ethical, abides by program policies and procedures, and reports concerns to the director
- _____ Accepts role as mandated reporter of suspected child neglect or abuse
- _____ Works to solve conflicts respectfully through mutual problem solving
- _____ Active in a professional organization and is aware of new research and its implications
- _____ Works well as a team and shares leadership roles with coworkers
- _____ Maintains good mental and physical health through positive stress management