



# Center for Talent Development

*Programs and resources for academically talented students, their families, and educators*

Northwestern | CTD

# My Gifted Child is Ready for School!

What should I look for in an early childhood program?

Presenter: Margeaux McReynolds, M.Ed  
*Program Coordinator, CTD*

# My Child is Displaying the following

- Advanced development of memory
- Early and advanced language development
- Sustained attention span
- Increased curiosity
- Abstract thinking
- Ability to use unconventional objects in play
- Leader in play
- Emotional sensitivity
- Early concern with moral issues
- Empathy
- Perfectionism

# Gifted children need a program that...

- Allows them to engage and learn through new and challenging experiences
- Is active and hands-on
- Promotes risk-taking and exploration
- Is collaborative, yet attends to the individual
- FUN!!!

## Early Childhood Education

### Different Settings:

- Daycare Centers
- School based programs
  - Public
  - Private

### Different Program Models:

- Montessori
- Reggio
- Waldorf
- High Scope

### Different Quality Factors:

- High quality
- Low quality

High quality programs provide immediate and lasting effects in a child's development (NAEYC, 2016).



## Supportive & Quality Programs

- Knowledgeable teachers that engage with students
- An appropriate learning environment that is well organized and attractive to children
- Grouping practices are used
- Clear learning philosophy in place that drives the curriculum and addresses all areas of development
- Consistent scheduling that provides balance so students have time to engage and explore
- Purposeful and intentional learning is planned by the teacher
- Progress is consistently monitored
- Parental involvement

## Programs of Caution

- Teachers do not participate and engage with students
- The space is not organized
- Children move around the room with no real purpose
- Worksheets and flashcards are given and placed throughout the room
- Questions are not asked or they are all yes/no
- No limits are set
- Punishment is inappropriate
- Information is rarely shared with families and only problems are shared
- The program does not try to understand the child's or families needs

# What does this look like?

- Warm and caring
- Active and hands-on: children are learning through play, experimentation and interactions with caring adults
- An environment that attends to student needs:
  - Materials for creating and pretending
  - Quiet spaces
  - Support for students unique needs (language, culture & family)

# The learning environment

- Responsive
  - Responds to individual differences
- Challenging and engaging
  - To maintain students interest and support their curiosity



# Curriculum should address

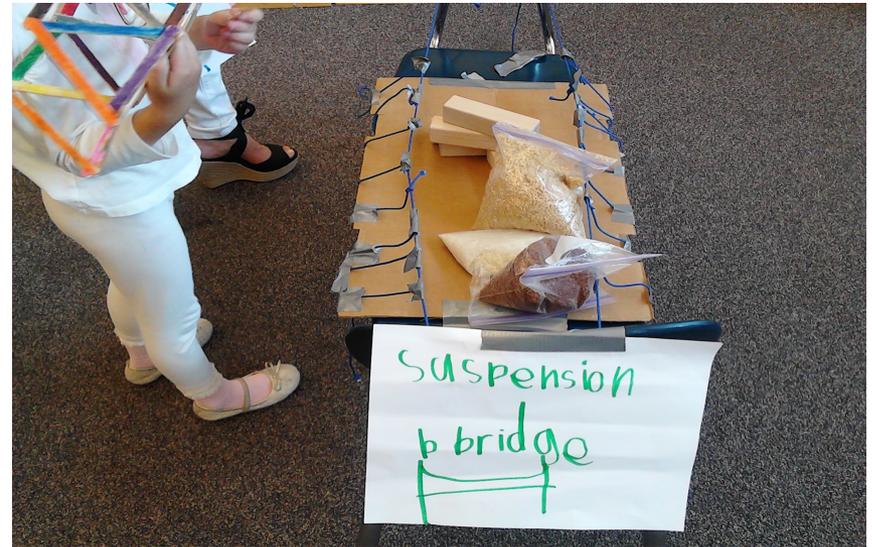
- Physical development
- Social & emotional development
- Language and literacy development
- Cognitive development

# The curriculum should be

**Play- Based**



**Child-Centered**

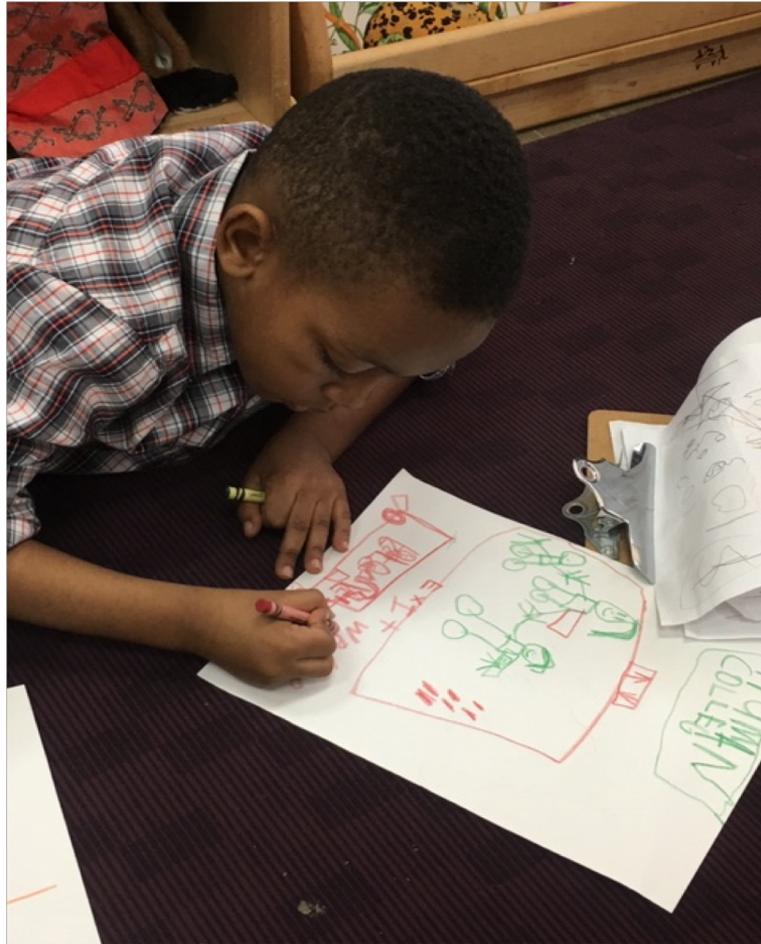


# Play-Based Learning

- Research provides evidence that play in all its forms is beneficial to a child's overall development and that guided play, which is structured by the teacher for an intended purpose, supports positive social foundations, executive function, and cognitive development. (NEA, 2011)
- Keeps students
  - mentally active
  - engaged
  - socially interactive
  - building meaningful connections

# Play and Language Development

- Play helps fosters vocabulary development for preschoolers (Toub et al. 2016; Han et al. 2010).
- Exposure to a rich print environment increases both reading and writing readiness



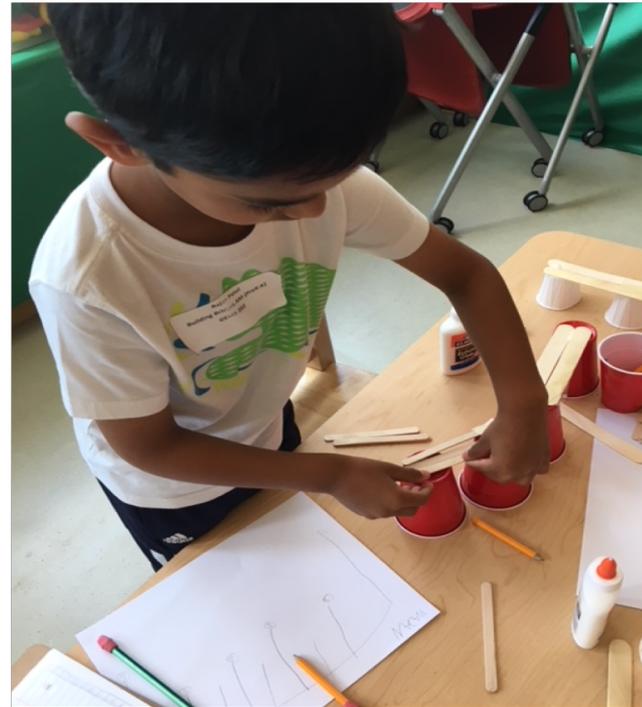
## Language in play

- Where you will see it in the classroom:
  - Blocks
  - Dramatic Play
  - Science/Discovery
  - Toys and Games
- Language should be introduced and modeled
  - Read-aloud
  - Rhyming games and songs
  - Circle time
  - Teacher-Child interactions



# Play and Cognitive and Spatial Skills

- Play fosters cognitive and spatial skill development in children
- Scaffolding from the teacher can help students learn how to apply these skills that will later transfer into related math concepts.



## Child-Centered

- Exposure to new experiences is important at this age
- Children help direct learning based on their needs, interest, and cultural backgrounds
  - Teachers plan instruction based on these needs in an intentional and purposeful way
- Instructional strategies are based on child's needs
  - Grouping
  - Questioning
  - Scaffolding
  - Challenges
- Multiple learning experiences are offered
  - Traditional
  - Non-traditional
- Academic Supports



# Staying Engaged



- Ask your child about their day
  - Dig Deep!
- Talk with the teacher frequently
- Extend learning into the home

Questions?

# Center for Talent Development

Margeaux McReynolds

[m.mcreynolds@northwestern.edu](mailto:m.mcreynolds@northwestern.edu)

[www.ctd.northwestern.edu](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu)

Northwestern | CTD