

Creative Arts Vignette: Four Year Old Preschool Classroom

Activity Option #1, Vignette Only

Review the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Expectations: Standards of Quality, Creative Arts. Read the vignette. Identify which creative arts Expectations are accomplished in the vignette by making notes in the margin of the vignette.

Extension Activity Option, Vignette and Activity Page

After completing Activity Option #1, small groups of participants will use the vignette activity page to note the ECERS-R and NJELAS-L indicators that are met within the context of the vignette. Each participant group will be assigned one section of the vignette to assess.

It is September and many children in the classroom have shared experiences with each other and the teachers about summer adventures including trips to the shore, swimming in the ocean, playing in the sand and swimming in pools on vacation or in the backyard. The teachers, Mr. Banta and Ms. Wright have elaborated and expanded on the children's interests in the classroom centers to create opportunities to extend these learning experiences.

Environment: The classroom is bright and spacious. Center areas are well defined and designated with signs such as "Art Area," "Block Area," "Dramatic Play Area," etc. in both English and Spanish. Within each center, objects and manipulatives are in bins and labeled, topical books on the ocean, ocean animals, boats, swimming adventures, etc. are in baskets throughout the room. Interesting writing materials and papers are available. There are many bright examples of individualized children's art, including paintings and clay sculptures displayed at the children's eye level. In the art area, two sets of open shelves hold containers with materials such as pieces of fabric and felt, papers of all sizes and colors (including foil, tissue, and cellophane papers), many kinds of tape, scissors, staplers, hole punches, markers, watercolors, paints, paper tubes, boxes, straws, pipe cleaners and blank books of all sizes and shapes, including fish shaped books in many tropical colors. There is also a round table with four chairs, a doubled sided easel and a small clay table. The art area is near the writing area and the library and a sink is nearby. There are two children at the art area shelves getting materials to build oars for a Lego© raft construction in the small toys area. There are two children at the easel. There are also other small groups of children and children working individually at the computer area, the science area, the block area, the dramatic play area, the sand/water table, and the music area.

Clay Area: At the clay area one child is using a wooden clay hammer and is pounding a clump of clay into a flat pancake. As she pounds the piece of clay, she decides the clay is too hard and spritzes the clay with water. "Now!" She works the water into the clay and then repeats the process saying, "My sand dollar is big!" The two other children at the clay area are debating how to get arms attached to a round octopus shape. One child says to the other, "Your octopus arms are too skinny. They have to be fatter like mine – like the picture in the ocean book!" Mr.

Banta points to the arms and then the body of the octopus and says, “Yes, your octopus arms are thicker and wider. They will be strong enough to help the octopus’ body swim through the waves and the water. Can you tell us how you made the wide, thick arms?”

Dramatic Play Area: The teacher added a half of a large cardboard appliance box to the dramatic play area. Three children are helping Ms. Wright put out the paint and supplies necessary for painting the box. The children want to make a pretend boat. After the painting materials and supplies are set up, the three children sit down around the table in the dramatic play area with Ms. Wright, look over several books on boats and begin brainstorming ideas on colors for painting the boat. They also discuss ideas on how they will stock the boat for a boat ride and for a fishing expedition. Ms. Wright asks the children how they might make fishing poles out of materials in the classroom. The children decide that they can make the poles out of paper tubing, yarn and wire hooks. They also want to make fish out of construction paper with hole-punched bodies to use for pretending to catch fish. Ideas from the children continue to flourish with the help of Ms Wright. In the days to come, the children also decide that they will make a recipe for “fish stew” like the recipes the classroom has already collected in their rebus classroom cookbook.

Music Area: Two children are at the music area and are listening to a music tape. Both are singing memorized lyrics to the song “Baby Beluga.” Several other children are dancing and swaying to the melody on the classroom dancing rug. One is singing into a homemade microphone. During the play the children talk about their dance movements using vocabulary about movement and body parts: “slow, swaying, shoulders, hips, feet,” etc. Next to the dancing rug are shelves with different instruments. Most of the instruments make soft sounds and were made by children: shakers, sand paper blocks, decorated sticks, triangles, drums, etc. One child sits alone and makes soft sounds with the sandpaper blocks. Mr. Banta comments to the child, “I hear a pattern in your sounds. How would you describe your pattern? The child thinks and then states, “pashuuuu.....pashuuu.....pashuuu.....like the sounds of the waves in the water.” Another child joins the pair. “I can make a pattern too! Fast, slow, fast, slow!” The child takes two sticks and makes fast/slow sound patterns by tapping the sticks together.

Block Area: The teacher moves on to the block area. Four children are playing with blocks. Two are making a parking garage with platforms, ramps and tiny cars. They are playing on the “Save This Construction” rug. It is obvious that the construction was made over several days. The children used materials from the art area to make signage, platforms and doors. They used straws, modeling clay, tag board, and markers for signs, colored cellophane paper for platforms and cardboard with masking tape for doors. The other two children are making a swimming pool for their small dolls. Mr. Banta asks the children to describe their construction. They used various kinds of blocks for the pool and the diving board and tore blue construction paper from the art center for water. “I took blue paper and tore it up to make water like we did for the aquarium.” The children take turns having the dolls jump from the pool platform into the water. Mr. Banta asks the children how the dolls will get out of the pool. He shows the children the

picture of the pool with a pool ladder from a homemade classroom book, Marcie Plays in the Pool. The teacher and the children brainstorm ways to make a pool ladder for their block construction. The children decide to make a ladder out of pipe cleaners from the art area to hang over the side of the pool.

Art Area: At the double-sided easel, two children are painting side by side while conversing about their paintings. During their conversation, the children use many positional words such as “over” and “under.” One child also talks about a new color he is making by mixing pink, purple and white. He names the colors he mixed and says, “The flowers look like my Nana’s flowers!” Ms. Wright overhears the child and responds, “Chris, that color you made with purple, pink and white is called magenta.”

Writing Area: Some children are making individual books at the writing area. Two children are making books for each other. They are copying their names from the attendance chart and drawing pictures of each other. A third child is using a piece of purple felt fabric and pasting it to the front of a book he is making about sharks. The children talk to each other about their books and drawings. One child gets up and goes over to Mr. Banta and asks how to print the words for the title of her book, *My Friend*.