

# Kindergarten Teacher Training Notes

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## Topics

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## Session 1: A Child's Garden

### What is kindergarten?

It is the German word for "A child's garden". In a garden we see colours, smell the flowers, explore and find living things; we hear the birds, feel the warmth of the sun, the soil, and the water needed to help plants grow.

Children are active.

Children make choices – to explore the 'garden' you set up for them. (Your kindergarten is the 'garden'.) The 'garden' is something the teacher creates – not necessarily a garden full of plants – but a garden of activities, full of colour, shapes, textures and sounds.

Children are developing language by talking to one another.

Children are involved in play.

Children are involved in creative activities.

### What kindergarten is not –

Children sitting in rows of tables, all completing worksheets.

Does this mean that the children can never have instruction from the teacher?

No. There are times for teacher instruction, and times when children explore the garden and choose what they want to do.

### Exploring the garden

How does the teacher create this garden?

### Colours

Painting, printing, drawing, collage (sticking coloured paper shapes of materials on to paper), picture story books, dress ups

### **Shapes**

Jigsaw puzzles, shape collage, blocks

### **Textures** (how things feel)

Sand, water, fabric collage, toys, plants, play dough

### **Sounds**

Music, listening to stories, talking to one another while playing, using puppets, pretending or dressing up.

### **Learning about the Creation**

Outside activities – nature walks looking for insects or plants

Science table where children can explore things from nature, such as leaves, stones, shells

## **What is play-based learning?**

What are the children learning while they are playing?

Many people think that a child is not learning unless they are being instructed by a teacher in phonics, reading, maths and science. This is not the case. Children between the ages of 3 and 5 are learning about the world by exploring it. The teacher has to set up situations that allow the child to explore.

## **Principles of play-based learning**

### **From the perspective of the child...**

#### **When I'm painting, I'm learning:**

- To develop my imagination and creativity
- To develop eye-hand coordination, that I will need for writing
- about colour and shape

#### **When I'm drawing and making marks, I'm learning:**

- To hold a pencil and control the pressure
- To express myself with words when I tell others about my drawing
- about colour, shape and size
- Eye-hand coordination
- The basic strokes of the printed language

#### **When I'm cutting with scissors, I'm learning:**

- To control the small muscles in my hand

- about shape, size and colour

**When I'm gluing and doing collage or junk-modelling, I'm learning:**

- About different textures
- How to create patterns and designs

**When I'm learning about the Creation, I'm learning:**

- To appreciate God as our wonderful Creator
- New vocabulary
- about texture, colour, weight and size
- To group things into categories
- To recognize likeness and differences

**When I'm looking at books and listening to stories, I'm learning:**

- That books are important and enjoyable
- That print on the page is written-down words
- To express my own thoughts, feelings, and ideas
- To handle books with care
- To follow the ideas in the plot of a story
- That I like books and someday, when I'm ready, I'd like to be able to read them too
- To recognise certain words when I see them in print
- To use the language of the story in my own speech
- To use my imagination and make up my own stories

**When I'm playing with blocks, cars, and trucks, I'm learning:**

- about shape, size and length
- To create and repeat patterns
- To cooperate with others

**When I'm playing on climbing equipment, I'm learning:**

- Physical strength, coordination, and balance
- To cooperate with others when involved in group play
- To solve problems

**When I'm playing with sand or water, I'm learning:**

- How to use tools
- To solve problems

- How to play socially with others
- about volume – how much sand will this cup hold?

**When I'm sorting things, I'm learning:**

- To notice likeness, differences, and to form groups
- about colour, size, and shape
- which group has more, which group has less

**When I'm playing in the home centre, I'm learning:**

- To express myself with my words while playing with others (language)
- To make decisions
- To use my imagination

**When I'm making music and dancing, I'm learning:**

- about of rhythms in music
- that music can be fast, slow, loud, soft, high, low
- Listening skills
- to recognise different sounds
- Memory skills when singing songs

**All these activities help the children develop and get ready for the next stage of learning:**

**Physical** – *gross motor*: (development of large muscles, e.g. arms and legs); *fine motor*: (development of small muscles, e.g. fingers)

**Intellectual** – Puzzles, memory games, building with construction toys, picking out similarities and differences

**Language** – Books, pictures, songs, rhymes, dramatic play using imagination, discussion, talking with friends

**Emotional** – learning to do things that are challenging

**Social**– working on activities alone or in a group, playing with one friend, two friends or a group of friends

**The kindergarten age groups**

**Age 3** – still very dependent on parents; the home is usually the best environment for them. If they attend 3-year-old kindergarten, it should be for a short space of time and only one or two days of the week.

**Age 4** – starting to develop more independence. In the kindergarten setting they can learn how to interact with other children, make choices and decisions and do things for themselves.

A kindergarten that places 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds in the one classroom is not ideal. Each group has a different level of independence and different educational needs.

Age 5 – getting ready for formal education. In many countries, 5-year-olds begin formal school. Whether we call it 'kindergarten' or 'school' doesn't matter. The 5-year-old needs an environment where they can choose from a variety of creative activities, but also begin formal instruction in literacy and numeracy.

A kindergarten that places 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds in the one classroom is not ideal. Each age group has different educational needs and goals. If this has to be done because there is only one classroom, there must be different teachers assigned to 4- and 5-year-olds. The whole group can be involved in the creative activities, but 'group times' should be separate – one group time for 4-year-olds and one for 5-year-olds.

## **Session 2: Activity centres and organization of materials**

Different activities are set out in different areas. You do not have to have a table for everything. A ground sheet on the floor can provide a play space.

Children do not have their own 'desk' or table. When they decide on an activity they like, they go and sit at that table, or on the floor if it's a play activity such as blocks. The teacher can help the children decide which activity they want to go to.

### **Activity spaces:**

#### **Dramatic Play areas:**

- Home setting real life objects like cups, plates, saucepans
- dolls, animal toys
- dress ups
- puppets

#### **Building area:**

- Wooden blocks, plastic bricks
- junk materials such as cardboard boxes and cardboard tubes
- toy trucks and cars

#### **Toys on a rotation basis:**

Change variety and types of toys weekly (no later than bi-weekly based on interest levels)

#### **Puzzles table:**

Jigsaw puzzles

Number or letter matching

**Playdough table:**

Can be combined with the home centre

Add tools like bottle caps, cookie cutters, sticks, knives, forks, spoons

**Painting area:**

Easels are best.

Paint pots of separate colours, with one brush in each, so no need to wash brushes in between colours. Best is containers have lids for storage.

**Drawing area:**

Different drawing materials – crayons, coloured pencils, felt pens, chalk

**Quiet Area:**

Books of children's own drawings, photographs and writings; age-appropriate books, picture books, cushions

**What to do in group time**

- Stories
- Songs
- Counting
- Discussion on topics such as things in the Creation, or the family and community.
- Show and Tell

You may have two or three group times in a day, and two or three activity times in a day.

**What to do in outdoor times:**

- Games with balls
- Skipping ropes
- Hoops
- Water and sand play
- Outdoor pretend 'cooking'

**DAILY ROUTINE SCHEDULE****Switch throughout the day between**

1. **Activity time (tables set out where children choose their activities)**
2. **Group-time (Children sit together on the floor in front of teacher, not more than 20 minutes at a time)**
3. **Eating/drinking time**
4. **Outside play time**

# Session 3: Getting ready for Reading, Writing and Numeracy (Under 5 years)

## Language development in the pre-school years.

Children will develop their language through:

- Conversation
- Stories read or told to them
- Play situations, e.g. shops, building together, dramatic play
- Creating together

## Language and listening

We have been created with an ability to learn a language. Children learn their mother-tongue by listening to their parents. Children under the age of 5 have a special ability to learn languages. The kindergarten is therefore a good place to start learning a second language. Reading starts with listening and speaking. Listening and speaking go together.

Listening gets the children ready for learning PHONICS.

Matching up sounds with letters is called “Phonics”. But children need practice in identifying the sounds that the letters make before they are introduced to the letter symbols.

## Listening activities

We can encourage children to listen. They can identify sounds in the environment, near/far sounds; high/low sounds in music. They can listen for the sounds around them: animal sounds, sounds of wind and rain, and to hear how words rhyme.

Games: Simon Says; Clap what I clap

Encourage young children to *listen* for sounds, without seeing letters.

- Say: “What sound can you *hear* at the beginning of *cat*?” (You can show them a picture of a cat.)
- Which words rhyme? *cat pot rat*
- Clap word syllables, e.g. their name – Jo/seph, Jer/e/mi/ah
- Guess the word I am saying, e.g. fl – a – g
- Play listening games such as “I spy”.

At this stage, don’t show them the alphabet symbols, but use pictures of objects.

## Starting to recognize that words have shapes - Beginning to gain an interest in print

- Pointing out signs in the environment helps them understand what words are.
- Children can be shown words in story books. By pointing to the words as you read, they will see that there are spaces in-between words.

## Word shapes

Children start by identifying shapes around them – circles, triangles, squares. Teachers can help develop this ability by providing jig saw puzzles, toys of different shapes and ‘which is different’ activities.

### **Getting ready for writing**

- Children will experiment with 'pretending' to write. They need plenty of writing materials for experimentation.
- Their finger muscles can be developed through finger plays, play dough, picking up small objects

### **Reading readiness**

Readiness is the step before reading.

- they learn language through conversations, songs, stories and rhymes
- they develop listening skills to get them ready for hearing the sounds of letters, (phonics)
- they start to recognize shapes through activities that will help their eyes see the shapes that words make, e.g. cutting and pasting shapes, jigsaw puzzles, which is different activities
- small finger muscles are being developed ready for writing.

### **Are they ready?**

It is important not to introduce children to formal reading and writing unless they have had plenty of pre-reading experiences. If a child misses vital readiness activities, they may not have good comprehension once they start formal reading. That is, they may be able to read the words, but do not understand the meaning. They may also be poor in expressing their ideas in sentences when they start to write their own stories. It's a bit like learning to crawl before you learn to walk.

### **For you to do:**

Make 5 lists. Write dot points for how you could help a pre-school child to get ready for reading, writing and numeracy:

Language

- Sounds
- Word shapes
- Writing
- Numeracy

## Session 4: Beginning Reading, Writing & Numeracy

Around age 5, once the child has had plenty of experience with informal pre-reading and pre-writing activities, the child may be ready to start formal reading. This will depend on the level of language development.

### Phonics

The 5-year-old child will already be familiar with the sounds the letters make. If you show them a ball, they will be able to say that it begins with 'b'. They may not yet know the symbols the letters make, and how to match symbols with sounds.

Before they start to do this, they must be able to tell you the first sound of a picture or object. If you hold up a picture of a cat, they can say that it begins with 'c'. You will need lots of small pictures so they can practice this.

### Sight words

Not all words need to be sounded out. For example, "the". This word is recognized by its shape. It is called a sight word. You can teach sight words by making Big Books, where there is one sentence for each page plus a picture, e.g., This is a dog. This is a cat. This is a tree.

### Expectation of skills to be mastered in the kindergarten year (4 years old)

- Cutting and pasting
- Perseverance (*Ask children to try hard to do something that they find difficult*)
- Drawing a recognizable human figure
- Forming a circle with other children in a group. (*Teacher gives instructions to stand up and hold hands.*)
- Counting to 10 (or 20) and number recognition to 10 (or 20)
- Colour recognition
- Shape recognition (circle, square etc.)
- Recognizing their name written on a card, and later, write their name.
- Learning the initial sounds of the alphabet. Use pictures or objects, *e.g. show three pictures or objects: an apple, an orange and a banana. Ask, "Which one starts with the 'a' sound." At this stage don't use letter name yet.*

### Expectations for 5-year-old children

- All expectations for 4-year-old kindergarten should be continued PLUS:
- Recognition of letters of the alphabet using sound names; matching letters to pictures of objects
- Writing letters of the alphabet
- Making up a verbal 'sentence' about a picture they have drawn. (The teacher can write the sentence for them.)
- Reading Big Books made by the class.
- Numbers to 20 - counting, adding and subtracting, making groups, completing patterns

**Resources** – Go to *Early Childhood* on the *Beacon Media* website. Find *Literacy* and *Numeracy* links.

# Session 5: The Curriculum, the daily program, class management

## The Curriculum

- Originally written by Rite & Stephen Mayers for YWAM
- Adapted to group the Bible stories under the themes of God's character
- Bible stories are provided for the teacher to read, along with a picture for each story.
- Adapted to include literacy and numeracy activities
- Note: There are separate Literacy and Numeracy activities for 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds.

### Which attributes of God's character are the basis for our themes?

God is ...

Love, Provider, Saviour, Pure-Holy, Creator, Wise, Servant, Protector, Truth, Lord & King

Each study on God's character goes for 3 to 5 weeks.

The studies are THEMATIC.

For example, in a study on *God is Provider*, we learn about how Jesus fed 5000 people, and at the same time, we learn about how God provides food for us.

In a study on *God is Protector*, we learn about how God protected Daniel in the lion's den, and at the same time we learn how God places us in families to keep us safe.

### Kindergarten daily program – example only – adjust this to suit your needs

If you have 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds in the same room, you will need a minimum of two teachers. Note that Maths and Literacy requirements are different for each age-group, so you will need a teacher for each group during Maths and Literacy sessions.

**8.30 – 9.30** Greet the children as they arrive. Help the children choose different free choice activities.

**9.30 – 10** Christian Songs, Bible story, Prayer

**10 – 11** Snack time and outdoor play. Healthy snacks and water only. Balls, skipping ropes, climbing equipment, sand, water

**11 – 11.30** Literacy - jigsaw puzzles, making books, which is different activities, Phonics matching activities.

**11.30 – 12** Maths - number puzzles, number lines, counting

**12 – 1** Lunch and outdoor play

**1 – 1.15** Group time – songs and story book

**1.15 – 1.45** – Theme activities - Science/Social Studies/Health topic on your current theme.

**1.45 – 2** – Rest time or quiet time - Lying quietly listening to calming music, or quietly looking at books.

**2 – 2.30** – Art

**2.30 – 3** – Pack up, clean up, Then Show and Tell or read another story book.

## **How to get preschoolers to listen to you & respect you**

### **Dealing with behaviour issues**

1. Have a one-on-one conversation with the child. Get down to the child's eye level and talk to him/her if necessary.
2. Stay calm during the entire situation.
3. Don't give in to anything. Make the situation go the way you want it to go.
4. Don't give in. Stand your ground until your point is understood.
5. Have patience and keep control of your anger.

**You will have fewer behaviour problems if you keep the children interested and motivated.**

Get them to stop and listen by starting to sing a song. Get them to join in.

Keep them interested - Find out what they are interested in and provide the activities that keep them motivated and busy.

### **Give clear and simple instructions**

Tell your children what you want them to do:

Rules should tell children what to do, instead of what not to do.

For example, instead of always saying don't for every rule which sends out a negative tone, try setting the rule in a more positive tone to help in managing your child misbehaviour better.

Examples:

"Speak in a kind voice", is a much better rule than, "Don 't yell".

"Walk inside" is better than saying "No running inside".

### **Rules**

- Rules should say what to do instead of what not to do
- Have no more than 4-5 rules
- Rules should be age appropriate and easy to follow
- There should always be consequences when rules are broken
- Write the rules on a large sheet of poster paper. Add pictures because the children may not be able to read them yet. Post them for everyone to see and revise them often.