

Transforming Kindergarten

Omaha Public Schools
BECI Professional Development for All
2017



Objectives for OPS:

- Understand the OPS Transforming Kindergarten project and be prepared to support and advocate
- Discuss and plan for the role of PLAY in OPS kindergarten classrooms
- Explore scheduling to support play
- Be a collaborative partner in improving education for young children

Introductions

Omaha Public Schools

March 2017

Kindergarten in OPS


- Historically
- Half-Day to full day
- NeSA
- Where did the kitchen center go?

Transforming Kindergarten

- Why?
 - Positive change requested by teachers
 - Support from Curriculum and Instruction Support
 - Best for children
- How?
 - Team of teachers representing schools across OPS met, then shared findings with all kdg teachers for more feedback.

Kindergarten “Look Fors”

Curriculum and Instruction Support

<p style="text-align: center;">Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Minute recommendations are met through whole group, small group, as well as differentiated instruction during center time. <input type="checkbox"/> Journeys Reading series is used daily with flexibility based on student needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Guided Reading starts immediately following the “First 20 Days” of reading or sooner, based on student needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Guided Reading is taught daily to every student by the classroom teacher. <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on activities that support authentic learning are evident. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing occurs daily. Writer’s Workshop is the model for writing instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> Balance is maintained between exposure to grade-level text as well as instructional and independent reading levels. <input type="checkbox"/> The literacy block follows OPS curriculum pacing guides for reading and writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers read to students throughout the day. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Math</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Minute recommendations are met through whole group, small group, as well as differentiated instruction during center time. <input type="checkbox"/> Go Math! Is used daily with flexibility based on student needs. <input type="checkbox"/> The math block follows the OPS curriculum pacing guide. <input type="checkbox"/> Math writing occurs consistently through the use of math journals or notebooks. <input type="checkbox"/> Students use math manipulatives daily. <input type="checkbox"/> Calendar time (up to 10 minutes) may be part of the recommended math minutes. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Physical Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Original student work is displayed. <input type="checkbox"/> The classroom environment is literacy rich and student relevant to create a classroom where students have ownership of their space. <input type="checkbox"/> Classrooms are purposefully set up to support active and quiet learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom set up is developmentally informed. <input type="checkbox"/> Visual displays are carefully planned and are at eye level. Avoid overstimulation for students. <input type="checkbox"/> Student materials are accessible and students have responsibility for these materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Movement/physical activity is an important part of a kindergarten classroom, and the physical environment promotes movement. <input type="checkbox"/> Objectives are posted in student friendly language. <input type="checkbox"/> Classrooms include a meeting space, quiet area, and centers for purposeful play.
<p style="text-align: center;">Engagement and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Life skills are explicitly taught and reinforced daily. <input type="checkbox"/> Children and adults are happy and look forward to school. <input type="checkbox"/> Parent and family communication occurs regularly (face to face, phone, email) and positively to inform about academic and social-emotional growth. Families are valued as partners and resources in helping their children to be successful. <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom management and engagement strategies are integral to student success. Sending students out of the room or suspensions should occur sparingly and with caution. Teachers teach and support children to build self-regulation, negotiation skills, and expressing emotions. <input type="checkbox"/> Children are active learners and are not required to sit quietly for long periods of time. <input type="checkbox"/> Children are playing, working with materials and working with other children. <input type="checkbox"/> Oral language is emphasized with many interactive classroom conversations, both teacher-child and child-child in all content areas and throughout the day. <input type="checkbox"/> Transition time for activities within the classroom as well as from the classroom to other areas should be minimized. <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers work with small groups, individuals and with the whole group. <input type="checkbox"/> Children learn literacy and numeracy in the context of daily experiences. Worksheets are not primary activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction is differentiated based on student need. <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction is developmentally informed. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Science and Social Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Minute recommendations are met through whole group, small group, as well as differentiated instruction during center time. <input type="checkbox"/> Pearson Science is used with flexibility based on student needs. <input type="checkbox"/> The science/social studies block follow the OPS curriculum pacing guide. <input type="checkbox"/> Students are given the opportunity to engage in scientific practices through directed, guided or open inquiry. <input type="checkbox"/> Students engage in hands-on learning experiences. <input type="checkbox"/> Students engage in investigations and conversations in order to make sense of their world. 	<p style="text-align: center;">High Quality Purposeful Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specific time is designated daily for high quality purposeful play. This can also occur during instructional blocks. <input type="checkbox"/> Student choice occurs daily. <input type="checkbox"/> Outside play occurs daily (weather permitting). <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers provide small group instruction and complete formative assessments during this time. Time also provides the opportunity for many interactive classroom conversations, both teacher-child and among children. <input type="checkbox"/> Play centers are tied to themes, standards and objectives and are changed regularly (monthly to quarterly). Play is supported with intentionality. <input type="checkbox"/> Center time provides extensive opportunities for children to represent and extend their thinking and learning through multiple modalities (construction, drawing, writing, painting, movement, dance, drama). <input type="checkbox"/> Suggested play centers include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic play • Writing • Blocks • Discovery (Science and Social Studies) • Math • Art • Library • Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Play centers integrate multiple objectives, standards, and content areas naturally to support learning.
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Where did we start?

KDG Cognitive Development and Academic Practices

- Think about your current kindergarten classroom practices. Open your interactive notebook.
 - Memory and Learning Strategies
 - Mathematical Abilities
 - Literacy and Reading
 - Science
 - Social Development

Kindergarten Today

- Children's preferred ways of learning appear to be at odds with typical school practices and structure. (Cullingford 2007)
- Research reviewed suggests that this may be time for kindergarten to be redefined as a balanced model that serves the whole child. (Ray and Smith 2010)

KDG Cognitive Development and Academic Practices

- Memory and Learning Strategies
- Mathematical Abilities
- Literacy and Reading
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- Social Development

**Are you ready for
Rigorous
Developmentally
Informed
Practices?**

What are you “freaking out” about?



Play

- Children now spend far more time being instructed and tested in literacy and math than they do learning through play and exploration, exercising their bodies, and using their imaginations. Many kindergartens use highly prescriptive curricula linked to standardized tests. An increasing number of teachers must follow scripts from which they may not deviate. Many children struggle to live up to academic standards that are not developmentally appropriate...At the same time that we have increased academic pressure in children's lives through inappropriate standards, we have managed to undermine their primary tool for dealing with stress-freely chosen, child-directed, intrinsically motivated play. (Miller & Almon, 2009)
(Saracho, 2012)

Play

Justify play.

Why Play?

1. Express their ideas and feelings
2. Symbolize and test knowledge of the world
3. Acquire effective support for academic and pre-academic learning
4. Engage in active learning where they can reconstruct experiences, generate ideas and test those ideas
5. Learn through hands on experiences

Types of Play

1. Symbolic: the use of representations to communicate thoughts
2. Social: interaction with others to develop and improve social skills
3. Educational: which includes manipulative, block, physical, dramatic and games

Play Theories

1. Piaget: children learn through assimilation and accomodation
2. Vygotsky
3. Bruner
4. Sutton-Smith

Play

1. Is valuable
2. Helps children learn
3. Is a beneficial curriculum element for all age levels and...
4. Must be integrated into the curriculum

Play in Classrooms

1. Curriculum-generated play
 - Play experiences assist children in learning academic concepts and skills
 - Centers are academically enriched (themes/standards)
2. Play-generated curriculum
 - Play experiences indicate student interests, which guide the development of the curriculum activities
 - Projects or units are developed according to interests

If you approach each new person you meet in a spirit of adventure, you will find yourself endlessly fascinated by the new channels of thought and experience and personality that you encounter.

Eleanor Roosevelt, activist, UN diplomat

So, what do I do?

So, what do I do?

1. Allow enough time and space for play in the classroom
2. Provide the needed material resources
3. Develop children's background knowledge for play
4. Scaffold the rehearsals of dramatic retellings
5. Become involved in play settings as to guide the children's attention and learning through modeling and interaction

So, what do I do?


6. Provide choice
7. Integrate literature into children's play
8. Integrate content areas; make connections

Kindergarten Look Fors

- Transforming Kindergarten Project
 - Small group met monthly to review relevant topics
 - This group developed a Look For document
 - All kindergarten teachers invited to provide input
 - Look Fors shared with building leadership
 - Articles shared with building leadership

Kindergarten Look Fors

OPS Kindergarten "Look Fors" 2016-2017 Curriculum Instruction and Assessment

Literacy	Math	Physical Environment
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Literacy

- Minute recommendations are met through **whole group, small group, as well as differentiated instruction** during center time.
- **Hands-on activities** that support authentic learning are evident.

Math

- Students use math manipulatives daily.
- Students are taught in both whole group and small group settings.
- Teachers use Go Math! as a resource to teach content standards; all workbook pages are not necessarily used in all lessons.

Physical Environment

- The classroom environment is literacy rich and student relevant to create a classroom where students have ownership of their space.
- Classroom set up is developmentally informed.
- Original student work is displayed.

Engagement and Communication

- Children and adults are happy and look forward to school.
- Children are active learners and are not required to sit quietly for long periods of time.
- Oral language is emphasized with many interactive classroom conversations, both teacher-child and child-child in all content areas, and throughout the day.

Science and Social Studies

- Students are given the opportunity to engage in scientific practices through directed, guided or open inquiry.
- Students engage in hands-on learning experiences.

High Quality Purposeful Play

- Specific time is designated daily for high quality purposeful play. The 20 minutes listed in the OPS recommended time allotments is the minimum amount of time. Play can also occur during instructional blocks.
- Play centers are tied to themes, standards and objectives and are changed regularly (monthly to quarterly). Play is supported with intentionality.

Kindergarten Look Fors

- Look Fors and play articles shared with principals via email
- Presentation and materials provided to Elementary Instructional Leader Network (EILN)
- Curriculum Day choice offerings in August and September 2016

Kindergarten Look Fors

- Presentations to grade level meetings and specific schools as requested
- Money provided for each classroom to support purchasing materials (selected by each teacher)

OPS Academic Action Plan

- The Gradual Release of Instruction is evident daily. (Modeled, Shared, Guided, Independent)
- This model is expected to be used in kindergarten and all classrooms district-wide.

Recommended Kindergarten Time Allotments

Time Allotments

- Time allotments that have been provided are guidelines. Flexibility and professional judgment are critical components to instruction.
- Time is necessary for meaningful play.
- Pacing guides must be followed to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

Daily Schedule

Play Pacing Guide

- Scope and Sequence
- Suggested Materials for Kindergarten Centers
- First 20 Days Overview
- First 20 Days Lesson Plans
- OPS Kindergarten “Look Fors” 2016-2017

Current progress and Next Steps

- Presentations to OPS EILN group
- Money provided to each kindergarten classroom
- Videos shared from the Atlanta Speech School and articles shared with administrators
- Literature and Research review

Current progress and Next Steps

- Boston and Minneapolis
- Big Ideas and Essential Questions
- Review of changes to the Play Pacing Guide with original Transforming Kindergarten group

Current progress and Next Steps

- Review and finalizing of Play Pacing Guide with all kindergarten teachers
- Input meeting with kindergarten teachers to determine needs and future support
- District focus on all early childhood practices through third grade

Let's go!

- Sitting still and being quiet is not a marketable job skill.

Diane Tirster Dodge, The Creative Curriculum

- Play is the most useful tool for preparing children for the future and its tasks.

Bruno Bettelheim, The Importance of Play

Think and quietly write.

Think. Write.

1. What centers can I realistically (material-wise) have ready to go at the beginning of the year?

2. How will I make sure that those are high quality, purposeful play centers?

3. What will my role as the teacher be in fostering **intentional** play?

4. What resources do I need to make play accessible to all of my students, every day?

Let's collaborate!

- Daily Schedule
- Center Ideas
- Next steps

“Freak Outs”, Fears, Questions

Transforming Kindergarten

I welcome change.

As long as nothing is altered or different.