

Environment Rating Scales Resource Information Sheet

Topic: Using Language to Develop Reasoning Skills

Scale and Item Number: _____

Common Issues:	Suggested Solutions:
<p>Concepts are introduced inappropriately for ages and abilities of children in group</p> <p>“Concepts” –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Same/different, which is the basis of many matching games - Classifying what belongs together based on one or more characteristics - Sequencing, putting one thing after another based on a particular characteristic - One-to-one correspondence which is the basic for counting - Spatial relationships such as up/down, in/out - Cause and effect <p>“Introduced inappropriately”- concepts which are abstractions, are introduced either before children are developmentally ready or by using teaching methods that lack concrete experiences. This results in inappropriate activities that are neither interesting nor meaningful for the children. (Ex: drills with worksheets, daily group session of repeating together numbers and/or letters, shapes, and colors by rote). Teaching children to parrot words through daily drill, before they have had sufficient hands-on experiences or time to mature, is neither appropriate nor effective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Limit the need to use worksheets and flashcards to only teach concepts to children. ★ Staff can help children develop concepts by pointing out key features and talking about them using the appropriate words, while children are dealing with daily life as well as while they are playing with materials. ★ Staff can encourage development of concepts appropriately by taking advantage of children’s real experiences to help them think. (Ex: clean-up is a good time for staff to encourage matching as children replace blocks by matching them to an outline on shelves, or practice classifying objects by putting the right things in specific places in the dramatic play or fine motor areas.)
<p>Staff talks about logical relationships while children play with materials that stimulate reasoning (Ex: sequence cards, same/different games, size and shape toys, sorting games, number and math games).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Teachers commonly forget to provide activities that encourage children to experience logical relationships. ★ These activities can be manufactured of homemade. Many activities can be easily and cheaply made with poster-board and pictures (stickers, magazine cut outs, die-cuts). Create teacher made lotto games, matching games, sequencing cards, sorting games, and number games. Make sure to make them accessible to children as a free play activity. ★ Even natural objects can be used, such as pinecones or rocks of different sizes to put into a sequence or to sort by size. ★ Provide games and activities that encourage children to use concepts that are normally found on worksheets. Provide these activities that children may choose to work with during free play times.

	<p>★ When you notice a child has chosen to work with that game, make a point talk about interesting features or concepts of the game or activity and ask questions to encourage reasoning. (Ex: Oh my, you found the square!; Wow, I see 3 triangles on that puzzle!; I see you separated the blue bears from the green ones; I see you separated the red squares from the blue squares; I noticed you drew a green circle.)</p>
<p>Children encouraged to talk through or explain their reasoning when solving problems (Ex: why they sorted objects into different groups; in what way are two pictures the same or different).</p>	<p>★ Take logical relationships a step forward and encourage children to think through why they did something the way they did it or have them talk through how they solved a problem (Ex: What number do you think comes after the number 4 in that puzzle?; How many cups of water do you think it will take to fill up that bucket?; Which one is the largest? I see you found the bear game. What do you notice that's different about those bears?; Why do you think that happened?; What comes next?; I see you separated the blue bears from the green ones, how did you figure that out?; How did you figure that out?; Tell me about your work.; What's different about that one?)</p>

*This information is adapted from the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005) and All About the ECERS-R (Cryer, Harms, & Riley, 2003).



“In our eagerness to help children learn concepts and the words use to represent them we must not forget that young children learn best from repeated, hands-on, engaging experiences that are enhanced by what staff say to children about them. We must not forget that there is a developmental component in learning concepts.”



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