

Michellen Daycare Center

Our philosophy:

One of our aims in constructing this daycare is to create a safe environment where children are easily supervised and cared for. Of course, this is the place where important activities such as eating, napping, playing, and going to the bathroom occur, but beyond the basics, we aim to foster an environment that supports the child's social, emotional, cognitive, moral, and language development. Different areas of the room will be specialized for particular skills to be honed, and all children in the classroom will be given the equal opportunity to advance these skills. We will cater to the pre-school age (ages 3-5).

Table Area

This table area will encompass a variety of functions such as:

- Eating/snack time
- Arts and crafts
- Drawing center
- Necklace-making (beads and string)

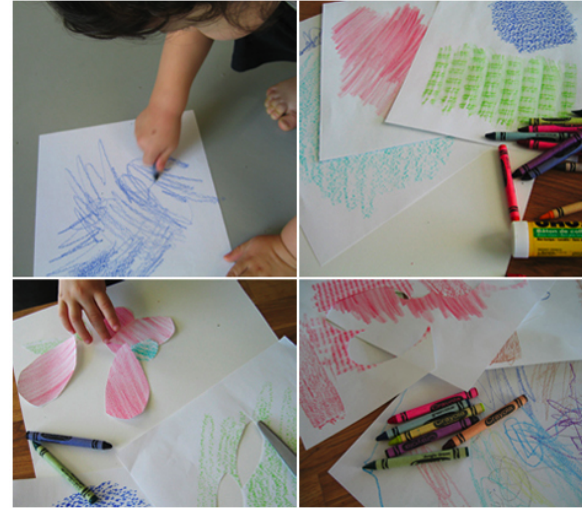


Table Area Details

This table will serve firstly as a snack area. Snacks will be given to the children once in the morning and once in the afternoon. We will take advantage of snack time to serve healthy and nutritious food to the children, and we will go off a rotation system so that a caregiver of each child is responsible for bring food every week. Snack time is a perfect occasion to teach the children socially acceptable table manners, such as everyone standing behind their respective chairs before sitting down to eat, saying please and thank you when food is served, and appropriate table behaviors. We will teach the children these skills both through social modeling and explicit instruction.

When snack time is not in session, this table area will also serve as an arts and crafts area, a drawing center, and a place for a bead stringing activity. The drawing and arts and crafts aspects of the table will allow children to hone many important skills, such as self control (e.g. coloring within the lines), fine motor skills (e.g.holding drawing utensils, cutting with scissors), sharing, following directions, and general artistic creativity. The necklace making task with beads and string will serve a particular function to promote children's effortful control and self management. Children will learn to inhibit their actions as the task requires, and they learn to monitor their progress and problem solving strategies (Lightfoot et al., 321). Overall, the table area is intended to be a constructive, cooperative, and creative space in which the children can learn, have fun, and work together all at the same time.

Sociodramatic play area

This area will have various toys that will provide a safe place to practice adult skills. This will include, but is not limited to:

- Toy kitchen
- Toy food
- Costumes
- Baby dolls
- Toy phones



Sociodramatic play area explained

These various toys are all focused on sociodramatic, or make-believe play, in which children are able to enact a variety of related social roles. For example, the children may choose to "play house", which will include making food, caring for babies, answering the telephone, and even dressing up as the "mommy" or "daddy" (or "daddy" and "daddy", etc, depending on the family structures they have at home that they choose to model.). Using the costumes, they may also choose to be a doctor and a patient or other social roles they have encountered on the TV, at home, or in stories. This not only helps them to better define the social world through social scripts, but also requires that the child regulates their thoughts and behaviors according to the imaginary situations. In fact, a study by Elias and Berk (2002) supported that children who engaged in high levels of sociodramatic play around age 3 showed higher levels of self-regulation when tested several months later (Lightfoot et al, 2013, p. 326). We will also include several baby dolls in the make-believe area, which will allow children to enact the roles of their parents, and practice certain benevolent behaviors such as caring, nurturing, etc. We will be sure to have the baby dolls represent different races and genders, so as not to enforce heteronormative standards in the daycare. We want the children at Michellen Daycare to understand that everyone is different, and that these differences should be valued, not discouraged.

Reading corner

Our reading corner will include:

- Books that will rotate on weekly basis, surrounding a particular theme
- A carpet with the letters of the alphabet on it
- Comfy bean-bag chairs



Reading Corner details

Our bookshelf will include books of a different theme each week. These themes can range from anything such as opposites, animals or colors to the laundromat, doctor's office, or post office. This will help students to build language and cognitive development based on their pre-existing knowledge and schemas, as per the information-processing approaches (Lightfoot et al., 2013). We will have scheduled times when we will read and discuss the new books and the associated topic. To increase our children's success, we will use "elaborative style", which includes posing "wh-" questions, associating new information to prior knowledge, discussing aspects of the stories that the children are interested in, and praising the children's contributions to the discussion.

We also thought it might be useful to include an alphabet carpet in the reading corner, which would not only make the space more comfortable and welcoming, but it will also serve a functional purpose for learning. As the teachers in the daycare, we would make use of the carpet in fun organizational ways, such as asking children to sit on a letter that begins their name, or asking children to find letters on the carpet that begin words that we learn when we're reading. We could also use the carpet for disciplinary purposes, such as when two children need to be separated, we could have them sit on different letters.

Water/rice table



We will switch the material in the table between water and rice on a weekly basis, and include small cups and funnel toys that allow the children to manipulate and understand the materials.

Water/rice table explained

This table will offer a variety of different benefits for the children. Firstly, the movement required for this activity involves coordinating movement as well as fine motor skills. That is, it requires hand-eye coordination, as the children will be bringing the shovel to the funnel. It also helps the children to develop one of their "privileged domains" further (physics). Through experimentation and exploration, they will begin to understand gravity, cause and effect, volume and basic properties of different materials. From a sensory perspective, children will learn different tactile feels of various objects. Lastly, their social interactions with other children will regard sharing toys, helping, and learning to cooperate with others in such close proximity. They may also voice their observations aloud, initially through collective monologues, but later through true dialogue. Throughout time, they will also learn to manipulate the materials in new ways.

Block and Building Corner

- Blocks of various shapes and sizes and materials
- Foam blocks, wood blocks, plastic cubes, etc.



Figurines for pretend play

- Animals
- People
- Cars
- Other figurines



Blocks and pretend play explained

From the ages of 2 to 5, children go through rapid motor development. Motor drive is a child's newfound interest and engagement in the ability to control and manipulate their own bodies. During the age range of our preschool, children undergo huge changes in their gross and fine motor development. Being able to stack, shape, and rearrange structures in this block and building corner will allow children to learn effortful control, and proceed in a constructive manner following their successes and failures. This area of the room will be cognitively stimulating for the children as well, because it will teach them decentration. Decentration is what Piaget described as children's focused attention on multiple features of any given object or situation, rather than getting consumed with just one aspect. Piaget found that centration was the greatest source of limitation for children's cognitive development. We feel that this multi-stimulating area of pretend play and blocks/building materials will serve as a perfect environment for small children to expand their focus beyond one single thing at a time.

On a shelf adjacent to the blocks, we will also include pretend toys such as animals, people, cars, and other various figurines, which we will rotate on a regular basis. During our supervision and play with children, we will require that children first build their structures using the blocks, and then they will be permitted to fill these spaces with the figurines of their choice. This will encourage the children to develop symbolic play, using the blocks to represent other objects or figures. It will also teach the important aspects about cooperation that they will encounter when faced with other children that want to share the same toys.

Miscellaneous



Plants and/or animal



Napping



Decorations

Miscellaneous explained

We will begin by having several small pots, which we will fill with soil and plant seeds in as a class. It will then be a child's weekly "job" to water the plants and bring them outside into the sun each morning and then back inside at the end of the day. This will give children an idea of how to care for a living thing, and they will enjoy watching as the plants grow and thrive. Eventually, perhaps, we will allow for the children to agree on a pet (fish, hamster, turtle, or other small pet), which they will also care for. In addition to the job of "gardener", we will have other various jobs such as table wiper (wipes the table after each meal), song leader (we will sing a song of their choice at each transition time... abcs, 123s, head, shoulders, knees, and toes, etc.), calendar helper (go over the calendar each morning), and other various jobs. This will also give the children a sense of shared purpose and help them to understand the various roles that contribute to a shared community.

As mentioned in Lightoot et al., (2013), it is recommended that young children get 12-15 hours of sleep per 24 hour period. Getting proper amounts of sleep is important for development, but research shows that most children (80%) do not get the proper amount of sleep. We will have a napping area, and required rest times, to ensure that children are getting enough sleep.

Our decorations will provide a colorful and stimulating environment, which will include many of the basics of early learning for children such as numbers, the alphabet, and colors. We will also display children's art projects throughout the room to help them feel a part of the place. Additionally, we will display each of the child's names, a picture, and their birthday on our "birthday wall". Of course, we will do our best to display many of these decorations lower down, around their eye level for better viewing.

Outdoor Play Area

- Age appropriate jungle gym
- Tricycles
- Hopscotch, etc.



Outdoor Play Area explained

Between the ages of 2 and 5, children learn a ton about their own bodies and how to use them to jump, run, skip, hop and play. Since we are lucky enough to have an outdoor grassy area at Michellen daycare, we want to take full advantage of the space so that the children get the chance to be outside and exercise, while still having fun! Jungle gyms are a great way for children to learn new gross motor skills, and it also teaches them appropriate risk taking behaviors (e.g going down the slide) versus unsafe play (e.g jumping off of the slide). The gym will be colorful and stimulating, with many different activities that will appeal to the children based on their individual differences. We will always be outside with the children when they are playing on the jungle gym, to first and foremost monitor their safety, but also to facilitate fair play between the children themselves. We will also have a few tricycles available, because research has shown that children learn to ride them around age 3. We will also fun games to teach the children basic things like numbers, letters, counting, etc, with games like hopscotch.

And the cherry on top...

Lastly, our daycare will provide quality caregivers, who are consistent each day. We are well trained in child development and proper care for children. Because we will be working with the students each day, we will be able to personalize their learning and give children the individual attention that they require.

