

What is Emergent Curriculum?

Emergent Curriculum is a non-traditional style of teaching that presents children with the gift of discovering the world around them by encouraging them to explore life through their own interests and passions. It is “child lead” or “child based” learning as opposed to “teacher directed” learning.

To implement Emergent Curriculum successfully within a classroom requires creativity, flexibility, observation, documentation, and patience.

What is the Role of an Educator?

Educators encompass many roles in the profession of Early Childhood Education but within a childcare setting that promotes Emergent Curriculum educators take on the role of “co-learners” instead of head teachers. They are challenged to be sensitive and show a genuine openness to the children’s interests and ideas. As a result of following the lead of the children the educators then create a stimulating environment with the hope to further each individual child’s exploration and learning on a certain topic.

The educators collect and present the children with as much information as they can gather, revealing it through experiences such as: visuals, art activities, webs, stories, circle times, songs, field trips, and guest speakers. Consequentially the educators strive to expose the children to as many “hands on” experiences as possible.

The educator’s objective through this method of teaching is to nurture positive social skills, encourage creative problem solving, support the developmental growth of a child and build a solid foundation from which children can stand on during their life.

In a Center that Practices Emergent Curriculum What Should I Expect to See?

A center that practices Emergent Curriculum will have an environment that promotes the delight of seeing things through a child’s eyes and presents this for everyone to experience! There are many ways to see this around a center such as:

- **Documentation**
Documentation is the tangible evidence of the progression that the children and educator

have followed during their explorations together. There are various forms of documentation including: photographs, art work, written observations, scrapbooks, quote walls, and room displays.

- **A Child Friendly Routine**
One of the beliefs of Emergent Curriculum is that children investigate their topic of interest to the full and without time restraints. The Center’s daily routine should reflect this with flexible open times during the day as well as recognizing the vital physical needs of children.
- **Learning Centers**
Learning Centers are areas in the room designed to cultivate a child’s interest and encourage growth in their developmental skills. These areas should be changed as the interest changes.
- **Has an “Open Door” Policy**
The “Open Door” policy in a center is based on the belief that it takes a community to raise a child. There will be an emphasis on parent involvement, family involvement and having the community at large involved as key resources,

volunteers and valuable support. This kind of team work provides the children with a more rounded learning experience and a greater appreciation for their culture and community in which they live.

- **Uses Webbing as a Way to Prepare for Activities**

“Webbing is the process through which teachers develop a diagram based on a particular topic or theme, highlighting key ideas and concepts. Webbing is a planning tool, which provides depth to and creates a map of possible activities and projects. By their very nature, webs foster an integrated curriculum approach and help teachers extend children’s learning and experiences.” Webs should be displayed clearly along side documentation so that parents can follow their child’s growth process.” (CHDC’s Emergent Curriculum Guide by Crystal Hart) .

How is Emergent Curriculum Beneficial to My Child’s Development?

Emergent Curriculum validates a child’s curiosity in learning and enables them to follow their passions. It lets them have the character building satisfaction of discovering by oneself. Emergent Curriculum focuses on a child’s strengths while improving on their areas of weaknesses. It reassures them that being unique and having an individual personality is a lifelong asset. It helps to create confident, self assured children who are hungry to learn about the world around them.

*Sincere thanks to Sarah Cook, ECE
College Hill Day Care Co-op., Ltd,
for developing this brochure.*

Updated February 24, 2010

**College
Hill
DayCare**
Co-Op
Ltd.



The Emergent Curriculum

A Guide For Parents