

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES

There are two basic teaching roles in a preschool--the lead teacher and the support teacher. For example, one person might be assigned as a lead teacher with one or two other support teachers. These roles can interchange or alternate from day to day so that a teacher may fill the lead teacher role for part of the day and act as a supporting teacher for the remainder of the day. A lead teacher takes the initial responsibility in planning what activities are going to take place during the day and is also responsible for the pace of the activities. The lead teacher should be first in transitions. For example, while the children and other teachers are cleaning up, the lead teacher will go to the rug area to organize materials and then begin a fingerplay or song transition as the first children arrive in that area.

Support teachers have an obligation to make the lead teacher look like a "super star". This can happen when support teachers make suggestions at the planning sessions or fulfill assignments of preparing activities designated by the lead teacher. A support teacher works directly with the children during group time to assist them in finding their places and getting involved in the activity. A lead teacher should never have to break into a discussion or story to quiet a child or settle some other confusion. The support teacher should deal with such situations. The support teacher should know fingerplays and songs so that he/she can assist the children and the lead teacher.

After the children leave, it is the responsibility of both the lead teacher and support teacher to clean-up and evaluate the day's activities. It is the lead teacher's responsibility to make sure these tasks are completed. If a formal evaluation session is held, the lead teacher should be in charge. If an informal evaluation occurs, it is the lead teacher's responsibility to record the suggestions for next time.

Basically, a lead teacher does more organizing and administering for the child care program than support teacher(s). However, the teachers share responsibilities almost equally. One teacher leads in planning and carrying out the planned activities; the other teacher(s) take a supportive role(s). Great things happen when teacher roles are fulfilled.

A basic part of each day's activities will include a concept time or gathering time when the children gather to learn about the theme of the day. Some guidelines to keep in mind for both the lead and support teachers are:

1. Do last minute preparation and set-up while the children are occupied in freeplay or other activities.
2. Use transitions to bring the children to concept time. Plan several transitions and use only the ones you need.
3. Use the theme of the concept in at least one other way during the day.
4. All support teachers should help and encourage children to come to concept time.
5. When everyone has gathered, teachers should become actively involved and encourage the children to do so, also.

6. The person in charge of concept time should remember:
 - a. The goals of concept time are to increase knowledge, inspire curiosity, stimulate language and provide for involvement in an organized way.
 - b. The teaching concept should not be too simple; you want the children to learn.
 - c. Teach specific concepts that can be clearly recognized and used as a theme for the day.
 - d. Use visual aids and special effects. The closer you get to the real topic you are discussing, the better the quality of the learning experience.
 - e. Always involve the children. Do not be afraid to repeat ideas so they do not forget them as quickly as they hear them.
 - f. Always prepare a learning card to be sent home with the child. This allows parents to review the concept and help the child retain the ideas.

Have students complete the "Teacher Roles" chart as you discuss the following information:

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEAD TEACHER

1. Develops the lesson plan
2. Keeps track of each child
3. Conducts evaluation session
4. Arranges room and selects materials to be used each day
5. Is first to each new activity
6. Communicates with children
7. Coordinates with support teachers to make certain they know what is expected of them

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPPORT TEACHER

1. Assists in planning
2. Keeps track of each child
3. Answers children's questions and helps with children's requests
4. Takes part in evaluation sessions
5. Helps with room set up
6. Assists children with clean-up
7. Supervises children during activities
8. Participates with children
9. Resolves behavior problems that might occur during activities
10. Helps arrange room and outside play area
11. Help children prepare to leave
12. Learns songs, fingerplays, etc., so he/she can take part in activities