



Fine Motor Opportunities

Indirect and Direct Writing Support



Welcome to SEE Every Child

Our Mission and Vision

Mission: The Somerville Early Education department ensures that young children in Somerville have equitable access to a curriculum approach where they are engaged in joyful, robust, challenging, child-centered experiences grounded in play, discovery, and their own interests, and guided by state and national learning standards.

Vision: Children are born ready to learn and have the right to equitable access to a curricular approach that reflects who they are and what they are interested in. It is the job of the adults in a child's life to prepare an environment and experiences that support a child's ability to grow to their full potential. In order for children to be confident and happy learners in school and life, the adult, environment, and child work together.

Roots of SEE Every Child

This curriculum builds on both current research and established theories[i] about how young children learn. SEE Every Child is...

Centered on the whole child. Research shows that for young children to grow and thrive, teachers need to think of them as whole beings, focusing on social and emotional development to help children build emotional awareness, skills for social interaction, and empathy for others.

Anti-bias focused. Anti-bias goals are integrated into each thematic project and all learning experiences are designed to be flexible and have multiple entry points, so that children with special needs, multilingual learners, and children developing at their own paces all have meaningful ways to engage with the curriculum.

Learning through play. Influenced by the Montessori and Reggio Emilia approaches, children have extended time daily to engage in purposeful, guided play, leading their own learning through active engagement with materials in a prepared environment, with mentoring and support from thoughtful teachers.

Thematic and interdisciplinary. Children understand the world through active exploration, constructing knowledge as they investigate, asking questions, and interacting with people and materials. SEE Every Child is organized around thematic projects that offer opportunities for children to explore concepts and build skills across content areas while investigating topics that matter most to them.

Flexible and adjustable. SEE Every Child is designed with flexibility to be culturally responsive to the children in your class. While each class will take unique paths in the curriculum, cultivating unity and collaboration across our city's many vibrant ECE programs can make children's experiences stronger.

Responsive and co-constructed. Educators have been a part of developing this curriculum from the start, sharing their ideas and visions, generating suggestions for curriculum topics, and giving feedback on draft materials. Educators adapt the curriculum based on the funds of knowledge of children and families.

Classroom Environments and Intentional Teaching

The classroom environment can be referred to as a "third teacher;" (alongside parents and educators) where the environment guides children to make choices, to engage with materials, ideas, and each other, and to behave in certain ways (Gandini, 1998). Preparing environments for learning involves intentional teaching. An intention is a purposeful aim, plan, or provocation that guides teachers' productive action in the classroom. SEE Every Child is grounded in the Four Intentions (Kuh & Ponte, 2021), directly related to practices that all teachers can carry out daily as they work with children and develop purposeful curriculum. The Four Intentions complement each other and when used together, allow a rich curriculum to emerge:

Compelling Materials

Explicit Presentation

Responsive Scaffolding

Following Children's Interests

Key Practices and Routines

While each program will have a unique schedule to fit their context, certain key practices and routines are implemented across programs to allow children a variety of opportunities to learn and explore.

One key practice in SEE Every Child is engaging in thematic project-based learning, guided by Big Ideas. Each month, teachers choose from among several projects, outlined in the Big Idea Guides available on the website. Exploring topics through Big Ideas allow children to develop deeper understanding and to make meaningful connections between learning and their lives. Different times of day act as entry points for children to access curriculum through the project approach and Big Ideas.

Some of these entry points offered by SEE Every Child include:

Meetings Throughout the Day

Choice Time

Small Group Times

Whole Group Experiences

Outdoor Time

Mealtimes

SEE's routines and teaching practices are designed to be flexible. Educators incorporate them into their daily schedules as appropriate to their learners and the structure of their program.

Learning Opportunities in All Domains

Within the daily routines and practices outlined above, children are engaging in integrated learning across all domains. Projects, guided by Big Ideas, connect and integrate the learning. These domains consist of:

- **Social Emotional Learning.** SEE Every Child uses the *Second Step Early Learning* program (*Second Step*, n.d.) which encourages children to explore social emotional skills through storytelling, songs, games and group activities.
- **Balanced Literacy.** SEE Every Child's Literacy component was designed with researchers from the Lectio group (Lectio Group, n.d.) and includes evidence-based practices to help children become strong emergent readers, writers and communicators.
- **Mathematical Thinking.** Based on the *Building Blocks Pre-K* curriculum (Clements & Sarama, 2013), SEE embraces math as a language through which children can better communicate and understand their experiences.
- **Science and Engineering.** SEE Every Child aligns with *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS Lead States, 2013) and allows children to investigate the world around them through hands-on, play-based exploration.
- **Artistic Expression.** SEE Every Child encourages making connections to Big Ideas through artistic expression in order to allow children to explore artistic media and to communicate their ideas creatively.
- **Physical Development.** SEE Every Child's dedication to educating the whole child means mindful incorporation of physical development. Children spend regular time outdoors, as well as play games and participate in activities that allow for movement and that make connections to Big Ideas in new ways.

Woven throughout SEE's curriculum is an emphasis on Anti-Bias Education (Derman-Sparks, Edwards, & Goins, 2020), which is integrated into projects and Big Ideas in order to promote positive self-image, empathy for others and an understanding of fairness. Anti-bias education is centered on 4 main goals for children: **Identity, Diversity, Justice and Action**. Through incorporation of these concepts, children are encouraged to be confident, understanding and compassionate, as well as develop their ability to identify injustices and use their voice to work towards fairness for themselves and others.

We hope you enjoy working with SEE Every Child. Feedback is welcome on our website.

[i] For a full reference list and additional research that underpins the SEE Every Child approach, please see the full Preschool Curriculum Guidelines on the SEE website.

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Fine Motor Development

Gross Motor and Fine Motor Development are essential for success in preschool and beyond. In order for children to succeed in the classroom and develop into readers, writers, mathematicians, builders, and creators they need to develop strength, dexterity, and coordination.

- **Gross motor** development considers the development of large muscle groups and leads to the postural and movement skills children need to have in order to move independently throughout a classroom, access materials from shelves, and sit to complete a task.
- **Fine motor** development considers the use and coordination of smaller muscles (often in the wrists, hands, and fingers) and leads to the dexterity and motor planning children need to develop in order to purposefully use a variety of mark making, self-help, and art/office tools. In order for preschool children to become strong drawers, writers and creators, we need them to develop:
 - Postural and trunk control
 - Flexibility in their arms, elbows, wrists, and fingers
 - Strength in their fingers
 - Hand-eye coordination
 - Bilateral coordination (and eventually a preferred hand dominance)
 - Motor planning

Teachers can support this development by providing children with multiple and varied opportunities to:

- Use a variety classroom tools (brushes, crayons, scissors, hole punchers, pencils, etc.) and materials (beads, Legos, puzzles, etc.).
- Work on vertical surfaces (walls, easels, etc.), slanted surfaces, and flat surfaces.
- Explore a range of sensory materials
- Experience a variety of postures (standing, sitting, kneeling, and laying on the floor) throughout the day.
- Have repeated practice, over time.

The following pages provide samples and suggestions for a variety of activities and experiences for young learners.

Sensory Experiences

- These activities provide children with a variety of touch, sound, sight, movement, taste and smell experiences that stimulate the neuromuscular system. These experiences support brain development, strengthen muscles and enhance coordination.
- Sensory materials are often open-ended, providing opportunities for children to experience and manipulate them in ways that are responsive to their unique developmental needs.



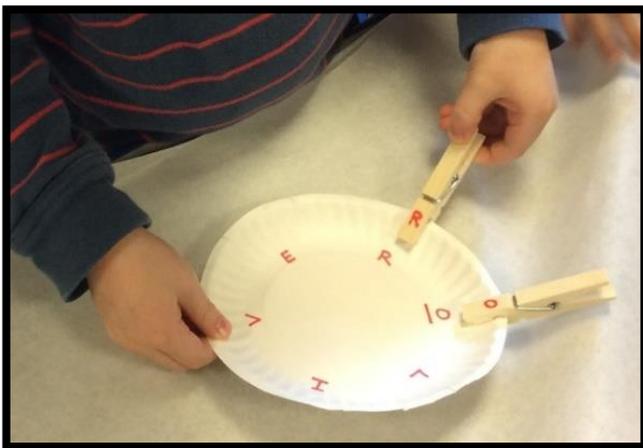
Transfer Experiences

- These activities can have a sorting component but largely promote the use of different sorts of tools that support hand and finger strength, left to right movement, focus, & concentration.
- Dishes with some kind of hard or soft object such as pom-poms, beans or beads and tools such as various kinds and sizes of tongs, tweezers, spoons, chopsticks, and eyedroppers with colored water, etc.



Pincer Grip

- A simple basket or box with plain or colored clothespins (can be spray-painted) of various sizes.
- Letters on clothespins matched with the letters on children's names.
- Add children's names, letters or numbers to the clothespins for a variety of experiences.
- Transferring tiny clothespins (from dollar store or Michaels) from a cup to the rim of a lid.



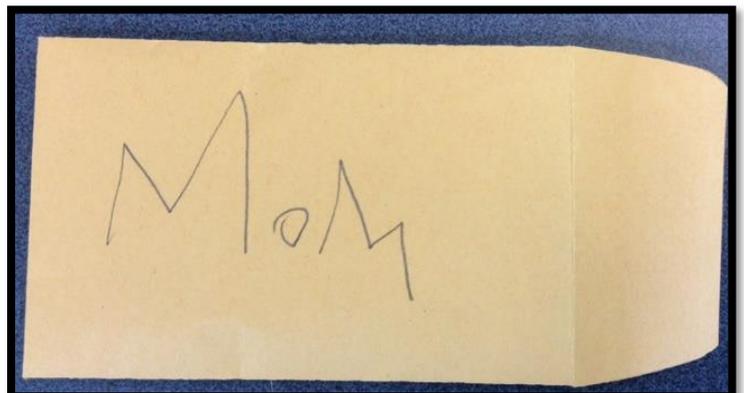
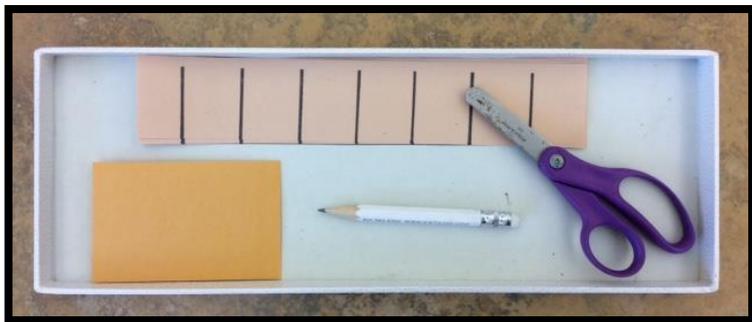
Hand Eye Coordination

- These activities can have a sorting and math component (counting, patterns, 5ness etc.) but largely promote hand eye coordination, as well as focus and concentration.
- The far left photo involves pushing feathers through the holes in a small colander.



Cutting

- Cutting Strips - Pre-made strips, copied and cut into manageable strips.
- Use small coin envelopes or paper pouches for children to collect or take home cuttings or use the cuttings for collage.
- Addition of envelopes and pencils often morphs into message writing.



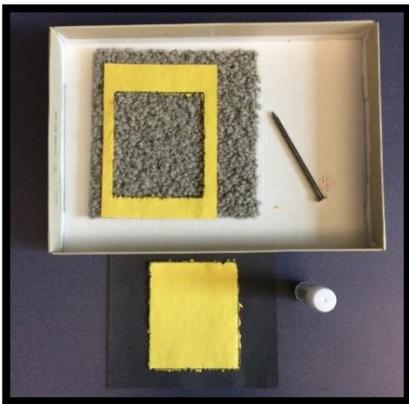
Sorting

- Sorting supports pincer grip, focus, concentration, and tracking skills.
- Provide collections of small objects for children to sort.
- Use felt mats, trays & dishes and tiny cups to add intention to this work.
- Add large baskets with larger collections of items such as buttons for group work. Use a larger floor mat to facilitate sorting.



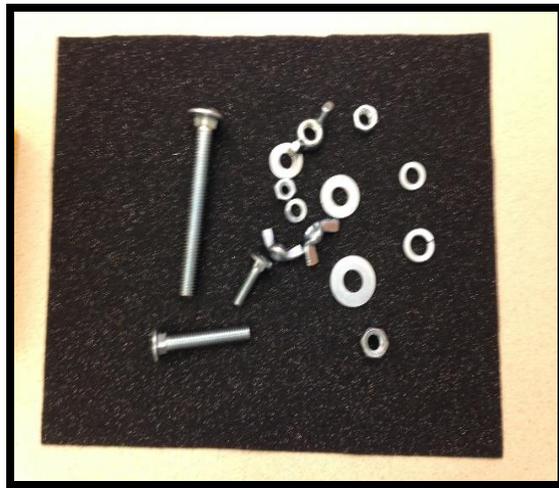
Shape Punching

- Small carpet square, a large nail or sharp golf/HWT pencil, quarter sheets of paper with simple shapes drawn or copied on them.
- Child punches around the edge of the shape and then drags the nail over the punches to release the shape, then glued on another plain quarter sheet of paper. Write the name of the shape on the bottom to label it. If a child completes multiple pages, staple them into a book.
- **Extension:** children can punch through the letters in their name, content words or punch out simple outlines related to the classroom theme.



More Fine Motor Work

- Pin Cushion – pins with large heads, buttons add interest but are not necessary. Could just be pins and the cushion.
- Nuts and Bolts – match sizes of nuts, bolts, washers, and wing nuts – facilitates sorting, estimation, matching, and motor planning.
- Hole Punching – Offer hole-punchers, small strips of paper and a small dish to collect the dots for later use. Children can sort and count the dots as well as use them in gluing activities.



Tracing

- “Sand” Tray for making lines, shapes, letters and numbers.
- You can use coffee grounds, colored sand, salt and cornmeal.
- An additional sensory experience can include The Red Letter Felt Alphabet Book by Ellen C. Gould, or sandpaper letters/numbers.



Resource:

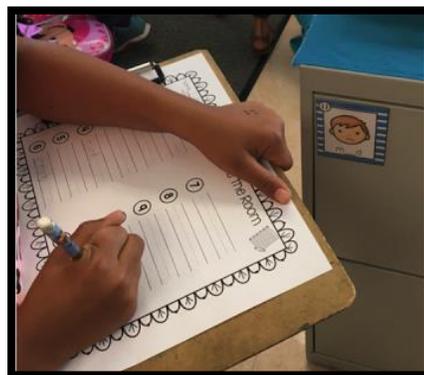
<http://plantingpeas.com/montessori-sand-tray-tips-to-promote-writing-success/>

Writing *

- Micro Writing: small notebooks from dollar store, small cardstock with coin envelopes for messages, small pencils to encourage grip.
- Tiny books can be in a basket around the room or at a writing center. They can also be using for recording and saving work, such as Lego creations or math designs.
- Provide opportunities and materials across the classroom for children to make signs and lists and encourage them to label their building creations. Children's own names is a great place to start.
- **Write The Room.** Place letters, name, and words around the classroom. Children walk the room with a clipboard, pencil and recording sheet.



*See Writing Center Guide and Journal Guide for more detail on



these practices.

Children Documenting Their Work

- Documentation is the story of what happened and a lot happens over the course of a day in preschool. Much of what children build and create needs to be cleaned up in order to move on to the next part of the day. Having systems and materials in place for children to document what they have made is a great way for them to save their work, and later reflect on their learning or use as an assessment.
- ‘Save My Work’ book: Simple tiny books in a container that children can easily access to record their work.

