

# Skills *for* Preschool Teachers

TENTH EDITION

JANICE J. BEATY



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**JANICE J. BEATY**

*Elmira College, Emerita*

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*To Head Start teachers and teacher assistants  
across the nation  
for making a lasting contribution  
to the lives of young children  
and their families*

# About the Author



**Janice J. Beaty**, professor emerita, Elmira College, Elmira, New York, is a full-time writer of early childhood college textbooks and a consultant in early childhood education from Cape Coral, Florida. She is also writing a series of adventure books for middle school readers. Some of her Pearson textbooks include *Early Literacy in Preschool and Kindergarten: A Multicultural Perspective*, 4e, with Dr. Linda Pratt, and *Observing Development of the Young Child*, 8e. Dr. Beaty has visited preschool programs around the country and throughout the world. She is proud to note that *Skills for Preschool Teachers* was translated into Chinese in 2011.

# Preface

*Skills for Preschool Teachers* is fast becoming a classic in the field of early childhood education. For over two decades it has prepared teachers, teaching assistants, college students, classroom volunteers, and CDA candidates to work with children of 3–5 years of age in preschools, center-based child care, Head Start programs, and prekindergartens.

The skills for working with young children are presented in 13 easily readable, fact-filled chapters, each of which is based on one of the CDA *functional areas*: safe, healthy, learning environment, physical, cognitive, communication, creative, self-concept, social, guidance, family, program management, and professionalism. Information on obtaining a CDA certificate is presented in Chapter 13 and Appendix A. For students working in infant and toddler programs, an observational tool, “Teacher Skills Checklist for Infant and Toddler Programs,” is presented in Appendix B. Each chapter also incorporates ideas and activities in *Inclusion* for working with children who need special help. To gain the greatest value from this program, students are encouraged to have access to an early childhood classroom to apply the skills with young children.



## NEW FEATURES IN THE TENTH EDITION

This 10th edition of *Skills for Preschool Teachers* has been completely revised with special emphasis on new educational technology, what is appropriate for young children, and how it can be used by them and not overused in the classroom. Here is a sample listing of the new material to be found in this edition:

- *Video clips* from the Pearson Video Library in every chapter; readers click on the video icon for live action of children and teachers and answer questions on video contents.
- New section *Do You Know?* at end of every chapter; readers answer 10–15 brief questions about chapter contents.
- Using *new technology* with tools described in several centers; why some tools are appropriate and some are not.
- Importance of limiting children’s *screen time* in their viewing of hi-tech devices.
- *Brain research* on using learning centers as brain stimulators; on how high stress short-circuits the regulating center of brain; and on singing as a form of memory-making.

- Neuroscience research on linkage between brain development and children's play revealed by *brain scans*; on using teachers' observations as their brain scans of children.
- Taking many indoor learning activities *outdoors* and children's use of them.
- New sequence of children's *fine-motor development*.
- *Children's picture books* as lead-ins to children's activities in every chapter; 80 new books and 51 multicultural books out of the 270 books described.

## Observations of Students and In-Service Teachers

Students and teachers should begin the program with a self-assessment of their present skills using the revised, strengths-based "Teacher Skills Checklist" found in the Introduction. (*Strengths-based checklists contain only strengths, not weaknesses.*)

## Observations of Children

Strengths-based observations of children are an important part of this program. The following checklists found in the chapters can be used by student interns and teachers:

Gross-Motor Checklist	Cognitive Concepts Checklist
Fine-Motor Checklist	Self-Concept Checklist
Movement Checklist	Social Skills Checklist
Children's Curiosity Checklist	Learning Center Involvement Checklist
Teacher Listening and Speaking Checklist	Young Children's Writing Behaviors Checklist
Young Children's Reading Behaviors Checklist	

## Observations of the Environment

To make the environment as safe, healthy, and as learning effective as possible, the following checklists from the first three chapters can also be used:

Learning Center Safety Checklist  
Bathroom, Stairs, and Exits Safety Checklist  
Outdoor Playground Checklist  
Classroom Cleanliness Checklist  
Classroom Eye-Appealing Qualities Checklist  
Learning Center Location Checklist  
Learning Center Checklist



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Finally, many thanks are extended to the following reviewers:

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# Introduction

**W**ELCOME to the exciting world of early childhood education. Whether you are a student, teacher, teaching assistant, or volunteer, you will find this rapidly expanding field offers unlimited opportunities to work with those fascinating young humans: children 3–5 years of age. The training and credentials you may need to enter this field are described in Chapter 13, Promoting Professionalism. Appendix A describes Child Development Associate (CDA) training.

Most training is offered in colleges, universities, or the programs themselves. This text book serves as an introduction to such training. The text also offers another option: the In-Service Training Option for program personnel who need to upgrade their skills of working with young children or for volunteers new to preschool programs.



## IN-SERVICE TRAINING OPTION

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The In-Service Training Option is a unique approach for teachers, assistants, and volunteers to upgrade their early childhood classroom skills. Although this text can be used in a traditional college course, learners also have the option of using the text independently for in-service training. The program consists of 13 chapters that can be used separately or in any combination or sequence to meet the individual's training needs. For college students in preservice training, the entire text can provide them with the basic skills necessary for preschool teaching. For staff personnel already in preschool programs, they may need to work on one or two of the skills at a time. What are these skills?

Skills Based on Child Development Associate Training

The skills in this text derive from the six CDA Competency Standards developed for the Child Development Associate (CDA) training program (see Appendix A). These Competency Standards represent basic competencies for persons with primary responsibility for groups of young children 3–5 years of age. From the six CDA Competency Standards, 13 key words or phrases known as Functional Areas have been extracted to serve as focus for teacher preparation.



TEXTBOOK CHAPTERS FROM FUNCTIONAL AREAS

Each of these 13 CDA Functional Areas serves as the basis for one of the 13 chapters of this textbook. Each of these 13 Functional Areas also appears as a heading for the items appearing in a self-assessment tool, the “Teacher Skills Checklist.” Thus, *Skills for Preschool Teachers* has integrated the recognized CDA competencies into a college-based teacher preparation program, as well as an in-service training program for teachers, assistants, student interns, and volunteers already in the classroom.

Competency Standards, Functional Areas, Chapters

CDA Competency Standard 1: To establish a safe, healthy learning environment

Functional Area	Book Chapter
SAFE	Chapter 1 Maintaining a Safe Classroom
HEALTHY	Chapter 2 Maintaining a Healthy Classroom
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	Chapter 3 Establishing a Learning Environment

CDA Competency Standard 2: To advance physical and intellectual competence

PHYSICAL	Chapter 4 Advancing Physical Skills
COGNITIVE	Chapter 5 Advancing Cognitive Skills
COMMUNICATION	Chapter 6 Advancing Communication Skills
CREATIVE	Chapter 7 Advancing Creative Skills

CDA Competency Standard 3: To support social and emotional development and provide positive guidance

SELF	Chapter 8 Building a Positive Self-Concept
SOCIAL	Chapter 9 Promoting Social Skills
GUIDANCE	Chapter 10 Providing Guidance

CDA Competency Standard 4: To establish positive and productive relationships with families

FAMILIES	Chapter 11 Promoting Family Involvement
----------	---

**CDA Competency Standard 5: To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs**

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT Chapter 12 Providing Program Management

**CDA Competency Standard 6: To maintain a commitment to professionalism**

PROFESSIONALISM Chapter 13 Promoting Professionalism

(*CDA Preschool edition, 2013*, Washington, DC: Council for Professional Recognition.)

True learning occurs when students have opportunities to make practical applications of theoretical ideas. Therefore, the classroom skills to be acquired should be performed in actual preschool settings. If already serving as a teacher, assistant, or volunteer in a Head Start program, child-care center, nursery school, private preschool program, or prekindergarten program, you can use the children's classroom as the location for completing the prescribed chapters. If enrolled in a college or university early childhood program, you will need to volunteer in a nearby preschool classroom.

This 10th edition of *Skills for Preschool Teachers* presents a comprehensive program for preparing primary caregivers in early childhood programs. It will also help those already employed in programs to assess their areas of need and strengthen their skills. It will help those preparing to work in such programs to develop entry-level skills in a classroom setting.

## Teacher Skills Checklist

This checklist was developed and field tested by the author for use as an initial assessment instrument and training tool by college students and CDA trainees and candidates. It is based on the previously mentioned Competency Standards and Functional Areas developed for CDAs.

Each item of the checklist stands for one Functional Area and contains three representative indicators that demonstrate competence in the particular skill area. Each chapter of the text then discusses one of these Functional Areas. Thus the *Teacher Skills Checklist* serves not only as an initial assessment tool for teacher training but also as an outline for this text. It is important to refer to the particular chapters of the text to clarify or interpret any checklist items in question.



## ASSESSMENT FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING OPTION

You will need to arrange for a trainer to make an initial assessment of your skills using the *Teacher Skills Checklist* in an early childhood classroom. If you are employed in an early childhood program, a master teacher, educational coordinator, or director may be your trainer. It is important that the trainer be someone experienced with young children who can evaluate your classroom skills objectively and support you throughout your training.

You yourself must first make a self-assessment using the Checklist, checking the items you have performed and writing down the evidence. Your trainer will do

likewise, visiting you one or more times to complete the Checklist. Then the two of you should meet and compare the results. After reviewing the data gathered, the two of you can decide on which of the 13 chapters you should read and complete the Learning Activities at the end. In the days to follow the trainer can revisit your classroom to see how you have improved.

Some trainers use the Checklist differently by scheduling an in-service training workshop for the entire staff based on one of the Functional Areas, asking everyone to read the appropriate chapter and complete the Learning Activities before the workshop takes place. Afterward, the trainer visits each classroom to see how the learning has been applied.

### Teacher Skills Checklist

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Program \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Directions**

Put an "x" for items you see the student perform regularly.

Put an "N" for items where there is no opportunity to observe.

Leave all other items blank.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>1. Safe</b>		
_____ Promotes toy and material safety within each learning center.	_____	_____
_____ Plans and implements necessary emergency procedures.	_____	_____
_____ Provides a safe classroom atmosphere through teacher behavior.	_____	_____
<b>2. Healthy</b>		
_____ Encourages children to follow common health and nutrition practices.	_____	_____
_____ Promotes and uses materials to ensure children's health and cleanliness.	_____	_____
_____ Recognizes unusual behavior or symptoms of children who may be ill and provides for the children.	_____	_____
<b>3. Learning Environment</b>		
_____ Sets up stimulating learning centers in appropriate spaces.	_____	_____
_____ Provides appropriate materials for children's self-directed play and learning.	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_ Promotes a high-activity, low-stress environment where children can play and learn happily together.

#### **4. Physical**

\_\_\_\_\_ Assesses children's gross-motor skills and provides appropriate equipment and activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ Assesses children's fine-motor skills and provides appropriate materials and activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ Provides opportunities for children to engage in creative movement.

#### **5. Cognitive**

\_\_\_\_\_ Helps children develop curiosity about their world through sensory exploration.

\_\_\_\_\_ Helps children develop basic concepts about their world by classifying, comparing, and counting objects in it.

\_\_\_\_\_ Helps children apply basic concepts about their world through high-level thinking and problem solving.

#### **6. Communication**

\_\_\_\_\_ Talks with individual children, including dual language learners, to encourage listening and speaking.

\_\_\_\_\_ Uses books and stories to motivate listening, speaking, and emergent reading.

\_\_\_\_\_ Provides materials and activities to support emergent writing.

#### **7. Creative**

\_\_\_\_\_ Gives children time, opportunity, and freedom to do pretending and fantasy role play.

\_\_\_\_\_ Provides a variety of art materials and activities for children to explore on their own.

\_\_\_\_\_ Encourages children to create and have fun with music.

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

**8. Self**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Accepts self and every child as worthy and uses nonverbal cues to let children know they are accepted. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Accepts and respects diversity in children and helps children to respect one another. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helps every child to develop independence and experience success in the classroom. \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Social**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Helps children learn to work and play cooperatively through sharing and turn-taking. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helps children learn to enter ongoing play without disruptions. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helps children learn to find playmate-friends. \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Guidance**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Uses positive prevention measures to help eliminate inappropriate behavior. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Uses positive intervention measures to help children control their inappropriate behavior. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Uses positive reinforcement techniques to help children learn appropriate behavior. \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Families**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Involves families in participating in children's program. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recognizes and supports families of different makeups. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Builds teacher-family relationships through family meetings. \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Program Management**

\_\_\_\_\_ Observes, records, and interprets the needs and interests of children. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Plans and implements an emergent curriculum based on children's needs and interests. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Assesses outcomes and arranges follow-up. \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Professionalism**

\_\_\_\_\_ Makes a commitment to the early childhood profession. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Behaves ethically toward children, families, and coworkers. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Takes every opportunity to improve professional growth. \_\_\_\_\_

(Permission is granted by the publisher to reproduce this checklist for evaluation and record keeping.)



## DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE (DAP)

In addition to the material presented in this text, students and trainees need to be aware of national guidelines for teachers of young children as spelled out by our professional organization, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and being implemented by early childhood programs across the country. These guidelines for all teachers of young children are called *developmentally appropriate practice (DAP)*. How you teach and what you teach should be in accord with these guidelines.

Copple and Bredekamp (2009) explain that developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) requires meeting children where they are. Teachers must get to know children well. They must also enable children to reach goals that are both challenging and achievable. They can do this if they get to know the children well. The following three fundamental considerations help teachers to decide what is developmentally appropriate:

- It must be *age appropriate*.
- It must be *individually appropriate*.
- It must be *socially, culturally, and linguistically appropriate*.

The material in this text, *Skills for Preschool Teachers*, 10e, has been developed according to these guidelines. How you as a student, trainee, volunteer, or teacher apply the information and ideas should also be governed by the three preceding principles. What teachers must do to enact the DAP principles is further defined by five key aspects of good teaching:

1. Creating a caring community of learners
2. Teaching to enhance development and learning



3. Planning curriculum to achieve important goals
4. Assessing children's development and learning
5. Establishing reciprocal relationships with families

The book *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*, 3e (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009), is fast becoming a standard for program practices throughout the country. It spells out in detail what developmentally appropriate practice means and how it should be used with children and families in early childhood programs.



## NAEYC EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM STANDARDS

In addition to following the developmentally appropriate practices described above, students, trainees, volunteers, and teachers need to be aware of two sets of program standards that have been developed by the National Association for Education of Young Children, NAEYC, to ensure high-quality early childhood education. The first set, *NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs*, updated in 2012, can be found in a correlation chart on the inside front cover of this text or online at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).

The second set, *NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria, All Criteria Document 2012*, is an updated revision of the NAEYC Accreditation Criteria, which took effect in 2006. Such standards are used by early childhood programs as accreditation criteria.

This text uses a sampling of appropriate criteria in boxes throughout the chapters asking readers to describe how they would meet the criteria listed. Assessment of child progress is discussed more fully in this author's companion text: *Observing Development of the Young Child*, 8e (Beaty, 2014). Teaching is serious business. Teaching young children is more than serious; it should also be a happy business and great fun for you and the children involved. Enjoy!

## SUGGESTED READINGS

Copple, C., Bredekamp, S., Korelek, D., & Charner, K. (eds.) (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice: Focus on preschoolers*. NAEYC.

Kostelnick, M.J., Rupiper, M., Soderman, A.K., & Whiren, A.P. (2013). *Developmentally appropriate curriculum in action*. Boston: Pearson.

Marion, M. (2013). Positive guidance in the early years: Using developmentally appropriate strategies. *YC Young Children*, 68(5), 6–7.

Washington, V. (2013). CDA: Supporting people and advancing our field. *YC Young Children*, 68(5), 68–70.

## MULTIMEDIA

*Basics of developmentally appropriate practice.*  
DVD, NAEYC.

## WEB SITES

National Association for the Education of Young Children

# Maintaining a Safe Classroom



Suzanne Clouzeau/Pearson Education



## SET UP A SAFE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

First and foremost for young children in your classroom is how they feel about the environment. Do they feel safe and comfortable? Young children may find themselves unable to relax and enjoy the activities you have provided if they feel uncomfortable or afraid. They may resist becoming involved with learning if the classroom is too cluttered, too noisy, or too full of aggressive peers.



### Learning Outcomes

*In this chapter you will learn to:*

- Set up a safe classroom environment.
- Promote toy and materials safety within each learning center.
- Keep outdoor playground safe and secure.
- Plan and implement necessary emergency procedures.
- Provide a safe classroom atmosphere through teacher behavior.
- Promote personal safety for each child.

It is also up to you as a teacher to make sure the physical environment is free of anything that could frighten the child. Do you have snakes, spiders, or mice in your science center? Some children are just not comfortable if they feel that these creatures might escape. You may need to plan your science activities differently.

Use yourself as an example. How do you feel about coming into this setting, knowing you will be staying most of the day? Is there plenty of room and enough interesting-looking activities to pursue? Are the other children happily engaged and not wildly running around? The classroom should project an atmosphere of caring for each individual by helping them become involved with interesting materials.

**NAEYC Early Childhood Curriculum Criteria: Safe**

(Describe how your program meets the following criteria:)

Materials and equipment used to implement the curriculum provide for children's safety while being appropriately challenging.

Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that increase their awareness of safety rules in their classroom.

Children have opportunities to practice safety procedures.

*Source:* NAEYC. (2008) NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria: The Mark of Quality in Early Childhood Education. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Copyright © 2008®. Reprinted with permission.

In addition to the classroom, you must check the condition of the bathroom, the exits, the stairs, and the outdoor play area to be sure they are clean, clear, and safe. Although a maintenance person may have the responsibility for cleaning and repairing the building and grounds, it is also up to you as the leader of a group of young children to see that the environment is truly safe.

## Bathroom

Slippery floors may be the most common cause of injuries. Make it a practice to check bathroom floors from time to time during the day, and clean them whenever there are spills. Sinks and toilets should be cleaned and disinfected and floors mopped daily. If the sink is not child size, use a sturdy nonskid stool for children to reach it. Water temperature should not exceed 110 degrees. Mark the faucets with hot and cold symbols in red and blue.

Always store bathroom cleaning and disinfecting materials in cabinets out of the reach of children, and be sure that cabinets containing caustic or poisonous materials are locked. If first-aid kits or materials are stored in the bathroom, keep them out of reach of the children but accessible to adults.

**Bathroom**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sinks clean, toilet flushed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stable step stools available
- \_\_\_\_\_ Slippery floors cleaned up
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cleaning and disinfecting materials locked up
- \_\_\_\_\_ First-aid kit out of children's reach
- \_\_\_\_\_ Liquid soap, paper towels accessible

**Stairs/Exits**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Exits clearly labeled
- \_\_\_\_\_ Two exits in every classroom
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stair steps smooth, unbroken, nonskid material
- \_\_\_\_\_ Carpeting, mats smooth, untorn, not slippery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stairs well lighted
- \_\_\_\_\_ Railings within children's easy reach

**Figure 1.1** Bathroom, Stairs, and Exits Safety Checklist**Stairs/Exits**

What about stairs leading into or out of the building? Can children reach the railings? Are steps sturdy and unbroken? If covered with carpet, is the carpeting smooth and in good condition? As a teacher of young children, you are also accountable for these aspects of children's safety in the building. Although others may be responsible for repairs and replacements, it is up to you to ensure safety by reporting problems and making sure they are corrected. Cutout footprints mounted as a trail can guide children to exits. The standard for exits in child-care facilities involves a minimum of two exits, at different sides of the building, leading to an open space at ground level directly to the outside. Exits should be unobstructed, allowing children to escape to an outside door or stair enclosure in case of fire or other emergency. The checklist in Figure 1.1 should be followed.



## PROMOTE TOY AND MATERIAL SAFETY WITHIN EACH LEARNING CENTER

The learning centers found in early childhood classrooms are the heart and soul of every program. It is here that teachers set up activities for children to engage in on their own, for the most part. These centers usually include art, block-building, books, computers, cooking, dramatic play, large-motor, manipulative/math, music, sand/water/sensory, science/discovery, woodworking, and writing activities. How safe they are for the children's use depends on how you as a teacher have set them up.

Are there slippery floors around the water table? Expect unwary youngsters to slip and fall. No safety goggles for the sand table? Expect crying when sandy fingers rub unprotected eyes. Dramatic play area too small for all who want to use it? Then expect lots of pushing, shoving, and loud complaints.

Make sure your learning centers are safe and accessible for all. The equipment and furniture should be suitable in size and complexity for young children. Furniture should be arranged to enable children, including those who use mobility aides such

as wheelchairs or braces, to move around freely. Such careful arrangement tells children their ways of learning are understood and respected.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (USCSP) is responsible for testing toys and materials for children to determine their safety. This Commission routinely issues recalls of materials deemed to be unsafe for children's use. You can register to receive emails of recalls by visiting their website at Consumer Product Safety Commission.

## Art Center

The art center should be located near a source of water so brushes and hands can be cleaned easily and water for painting is not so easily spilled. The center may consist of one or more easels for painting, one or more tables for flat painting and crafts, and shelves at children's level for youngsters to select and return art materials on their own. Teachers' art supplies are better stored in cabinets inaccessible to children.

Sharp scissors are less dangerous for young children to use than dull ones, which may slip and cut a child. Small sharp scissors can help young children develop manipulative skills safely. A nearby adult should keep a watchful eye on children when scissors are out, however, and have children put the scissors away in scissors holders on nearby shelves when not in use.

Replace art materials that are hazardous with nontoxic materials. Some sidewalk chalk contains lead. Contact the Art and Creative Materials Institute to check for certified safe materials. Use water-based nontoxic paints and glues. Even rubber cement is toxic if inhaled. Instead, use white glue.

Avoid using powdered clay, powdered tempera paints, or instant papier-mâché. When using modeling sand, be sure children wear safety goggles to prevent them from wiping their eyes with sandy fingers. When using glitter, have children apply it from a shaker and keep hands away from it. If glitter gets on fingers, be sure children wipe or wash it off because glitter can be dangerous to eyes, which children tend to rub. All art materials for young children should be nontoxic, nonflammable, and water-based. Do not use tiny craft and collage beads, buttons, and gems that the youngest children may put in mouths, noses, or ears.

## Block-Building Center

Blocks should be stored lengthwise on shelves for easy selection and return. Be sure the block shelves are steady, against the wall if necessary, so that someone bumping against them will not tip them over on children playing in the center. The principal safety feature of block-building areas is the height of constructions. Some teachers permit children to build with wooden unit blocks or large hollow blocks only as high as a child's own height. Others allow children to climb on chairs to build towers as high as they can reach. The danger is that the tall building may fall on another child or that the climbing child may fall and be injured. You must decide if this situation poses a problem with your children. If this is a safety priority with you, you will want to establish block-building rules with the children at the outset.

Because preliterate children are not able to read written rules, why not post illustrated rules for them to follow? You can draw an outline of a block building next to the outline of a child to show the allowable height and another that shows a building that is too tall. Underneath each picture write a simple rule such as “Just Right” or “Too Tall.” Most children will soon figure out what the words as well as the illustrations mean.

Block accessories such as small trucks, cars, figures of people, animals, and dollhouse furniture should be free of broken or jagged parts. Flat carpeting in the block area makes a most appropriate building space. Riding trucks do not belong here where they may crash into buildings or their builders.

## Book Center

Your library or reading corner should be a comfortable place for children to stretch out on the floor or curl up on a soft couch to read. Make sure the floor is covered with a rug to keep it warm enough in cold weather, and place the reading corner in a location that is free from drafts. Be sure that floor pillows or beanbag chairs do not accidentally cover heat vents. If you have a rocking chair, help children learn to control it. Children tend to get carried away with child-size rockers and may tip over or rock on someone’s fingers. Keep bookshelves low enough so that children are not tempted to climb up for out-of-reach books.

## Computer Center

Young children can teach themselves to use these powerful interactive learning tools if teachers set up the area for their convenience and safety. Children should sit and not stand when using this valuable piece of equipment. Two children at a time can be seated in child-size chairs in front of one computer with the monitor screen on a table at their eye level, not on an adult-size computer shelf high above them. Electric cords should be plugged into a wall outlet behind the machine and out of the children’s reach. Do not use long extension cords that people will trip over. Instead, plug computers into surge bar outlets. Keep water and sticky fingers away from the computer keyboard. Children should wash their hands before using the computer. When it is not in use, cover the keyboard or move it out of reach to prevent children from playing with keys or inserting tiny objects.

## Cooking Center

Most states have licensing and insurance regulations governing safety in child-care centers. You also need to learn the local safety regulations governing hot food preparation in schools and child-care centers. Some schools do not allow electric appliances, microwave ovens, hot plates, or blenders in the classroom. Some require only special kitchen areas for hot cooking. Food preparation without heating can be carried on within the classroom. Whatever the case, an adult should always be in the area during food preparation. Electrical equipment can be plugged into countertop

outlets that are otherwise covered when not in use. Young children can learn to use knives and scrapers safely, but an adult should supervise.

## Dramatic Play Center

The dramatic play center can be sectioned off for children's pretend play with child-size cupboards, refrigerator, stove, and sink. Toy safety is a particular concern in the dramatic play area. Check dolls for small parts that a child could twist off and swallow accidentally. Remove dolls with buttons, glass eyes, and beads that are sewed or wired on. Be sure that earrings are large and that strings of beads are unbroken. Tiny objects sometimes find their way into young children's noses or ears. Also remove toys with springs, wires, or sharp parts. Look for a nontoxic label on all painted toys.

If you use plastic dishes, knives, or spoons, make sure they are not broken. Cutting knives, of course, should not be used for play. Ensure that mirrors are shatterproof and that breakable dishes are used only in carpeted areas. Remove drawstrings on dress-up clothes. Be sure hooks for hanging dress-up clothes are not at children's eye level.

Latex balloons should not be permitted in the children's environment. Young children may be allergic to latex. Other types of balloons are also dangerous to children because when they break pieces become choking hazards (Bergen & Robertson, 2013).

## Gross-Motor Center

Indoor climbing equipment and the tumbling area should be cushioned with pads or other materials thick enough to prevent injuries in case a child falls. Establish safety rules for climbers at the outset. If you have wheeled riding vehicles, establish safety rules with traffic signs and safety games. This is how young children learn safety rules—through games and fun activities.

Choose equipment appropriate for young children for indoor play. Teeter-totters are too difficult for most preschoolers to use without injury. Lofts should be no higher than 4 or 5 feet off the ground. A sturdy railing around the top is important. If the railing contains slats, they should be spaced close enough that children's heads cannot be entrapped. How do children get up onto the loft? Steps are safer than ladders. Lofts should be monitored at all times and the number of children playing in them limited.

## Inclusion

Children with physical limitations should be involved in all of the activity areas of the classroom, including the large-motor center. Find ways to give them safe access to large-motor experiences. Children in wheelchairs can throw and catch soft balls or inflated balls (not balloons). True *inclusion* means that all children are included in all classroom activities. Use your ingenuity to accommodate everyone. For example, in a catch and toss game, have everyone sit in chairs just as a child who uses a wheelchair does.



## Manipulative/Math Center

If you have 3-year-olds or younger children in your program, be sure the stringing beads and counters are large. Three-year-olds often put small objects into their mouths, noses, and ears. Use large counting and sorting items whenever possible, and keep them stored in clear plastic containers on nearby shelves. Check games and toys for broken parts and discard anything with splinters, wires, or peeling paint.

### *Inclusion*

Tables for children with minimal mobility should be sturdy enough to support their weight. Otherwise a carpeted area may make manipulative play easier. Select large versions of manipulative toys. Use trays or cookie sheets with raised edges to contain small pieces of games. Glue knobs onto puzzle pieces for easier handling. (Wellhousen & Crowther, 2004).

## Music/Listening Center

Cords on CD and tape recorders and players and electronic keyboards should be out of children's reach. Children should not be allowed to plug or unplug the equipment. Better to use battery-operated players when possible. However, avoid equipment with small mercury-type batteries that could be swallowed accidentally. If children use headsets for listening to tapes, or CDs, be sure to control the volume on the player in a permanent manner so that children's hearing is not damaged if the volume is too loud. Cover control buttons with green and red tapes so children have a visual clue for starting and stopping equipment.

## Sand/Water/Sensory Table

When playing at the sand table, children should wear safety goggles to keep sand out of their eyes. Spilled water and sand around tables are slippery and should be cleaned up. Spilled rice from a sand table is especially slippery. Keep a child-size mop, broom, and dustpan in the area so that children can help with cleanup. They will not only take pride in themselves and their classroom by performing this adult-type task but also learn safety practices useful in other settings. To prevent spills in the first place, keep ingredients at low levels in the play tables. Children can have just as much fun and learning with a few inches of water as they do with a filled water table—and they will stay drier.

Be sure toys and implements for sand and water play are not broken, rusty, or sharp-edged. Glass containers such as baby food jars or glass eyedroppers should not be used. Replace them instead with plastic cups, containers, bottles, funnels, droppers, and basters.

Clean and sanitize the water table with a bleach solution at least once a week before filling with water. Also clean and sanitize toys to be used. Have the children



wash their hands before water play. Avoid using sponge toys, which may harbor bacteria. When play is finished, discard the water.

Science/Discovery Center

Display children’s collections of seeds or beans under clear plastic wrap instead of leaving them open for handling. As mentioned previously, some young children put such items in their mouths, and certain seeds or beans may be poisonous. Be sure animal cages are cleaned daily and food and water are provided.

Certain houseplants are highly poisonous if ingested and thus pose a hazard to young children who may be tempted to eat a leaf or berry. If you have plants in your classroom, keep them out of reach. Rather than warning children against eating such leaves or berries, it is better to remove the temptation. If you stress “no eating,” certain young children who had no notion of eating a plant part will try it just because you mentioned not doing it! Figure 1.2 lists some of the common poisonous plants. If a child has ingested a poisonous plant, immediately call the local Poison Control Center whose number should be posted on the wall next to a phone. Follow their directions before treating the child. Current research does not support inducing vomiting outside a hospital.

Woodworking Center

In woodworking, as in playing with sand, children should wear safety goggles, and most love the experience. Use small-size adult hammers, saws, pliers, and screwdrivers. Most children’s toy sets are not made for use with real wood and nails. Children can learn the safe use of real tools by having a staff member or a parent demonstrate how. An experienced child can also show a beginner. Limiting the number of children in the area will also reduce safety hazards.

Poisonous Indoor Plants	Poisonous Outdoor Plants	
Philodendron	Holly	Yew
Mistletoe berries	Mustard	Lily-of-the-valley
Dieffenbachia	Hydrangea	Mushroom
Poinsettia leaves	Azalea	Black locust tree
	Castor bean	Rhubarb leaves
	Rhododendron	Cherry tree
	Datura	Oleander

Figure 1.2 Common Poisonous Plants

Source: Adapted from *Safety in Preschool Programs*, Janice J. Beaty, 2004, Columbus, OH: Pearson Education, Inc. Based on Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs (p. 23) by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association, 2002.



David Kostelnik/Pearson Education

*Children's sawing should be supervised.*

Woodworking generates much interest for both boys and girls. Roofing nails and ceiling tiles are easier for beginners to use successfully. To cut down on noise, put rug squares under the pounding materials. Pick up nails not being used and keep them in covered containers so they don't fall on the floor. Have children help make rules illustrated with stick figures to be posted in the center: "Two children at a time"; "Tools used only when teacher is present"; "Wear goggles at all times." You or a staff member should model how tools are to be used.

### ***Inclusion***

Use golf tees and Styrofoam for children with weak muscle tone to help them learn to hammer.

## **Writing Center**

This is the most important learning center these days with the focus throughout the educational system on promoting literacy. It can be set up simply with a table, chairs, and nearby shelves for writing materials. But a more interesting arrangement, such as an office, invites more children to participate. A desk with pigeonholes, desk lamp, file cabinet, in-basket, pencil sharpener, toy telephone, and old cell phones make the center more realistic. Pens, pencils, markers, pads, tablets, stationery,

envelopes, stamps and stampers, paper clips, and paper punchers can be stored in containers on shelves or in the pigeonholes of a desk.

Place the desks against the wall with wires from lamps plugged into a socket directly behind the desk without extension cords. Any wall sockets not in use should be covered. Encourage children to use the materials only in the center. Pencils with sharp points, for instance, can accidentally stab someone when carried in a child's swinging hand. Make sure the markers and stamping ink are nontoxic.

## Battery-Operated Toys and Video Games


Most battery-operated toys and video games are not appropriate for the preschool classroom. Such toys can be played with at home. In preschool, children should be involved in creating their own actions with toys, not passively watching toys move with battery power.

## Safety Checklist

A safety checklist is one of the most effective methods for establishing and maintaining safe learning centers. It will help you to set up the classroom initially with safety in mind and will assist you in checking daily on the condition of the classroom. The Learning Center Safety Checklist in Figure 1.3 serves this purpose. Have a different child every day serve as an assistant safety inspector to go around with you to check each center. This kind of hands-on approach teaches children safety in a most immediate and effective manner.

## General Room Conditions

Check the heating system in your room. Exposed pipes should not be allowed unless they are thoroughly protected with nonasbestos insulation. Radiators and space heaters should be sectioned off to prevent children's direct contact. Portable electric or kerosene heaters are generally prohibited by fire codes or insurance regulations. Be sure that safety equipment such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are in working order and that staff members know what to do and how to use them in the event of a fire.

 Watch this video explaining how to teach children what to do in the event of fire. What new ideas did you learn about fire safety, and how can you apply them in your own classroom?

Electric cords and wires should not be accessible to children. Avoid using extension cords whenever possible. Place aquariums, incubators, and other classroom electrical equipment near electric outlets that are inaccessible to little hands. Exposed electric outlets should be covered with safety plugs.

Check your walls, furniture, and cupboards for peeling paint. Children love to pick off the pieces and put them in their mouths. Be sure the surfaces are sanded and refinished with nonlead paint. Remove broken toys and furniture and have them repaired. Don't wait until someone gets hurt. Check wooden equipment and room dividers for splintery surfaces and have them refinished. What about the corners of the room dividers? Will children be hurt if they stumble against the edges? You may need to tape padding onto edges that are sharp.

### Art Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Scissors are supervised
- \_\_\_\_\_ Toxic materials removed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Water spills cleaned up
- \_\_\_\_\_ Goggles used with modeling sand, glitter

### Block Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Free-standing shelves low and sturdy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Building heights within limits
- \_\_\_\_\_ Block accessories free of broken parts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Riding trucks kept out of center

### Book Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Appropriate carpeting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Heat vents not accidentally covered
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rocking chairs away from children on floor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bookshelves low and sturdy

### Computer Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Computer monitor at child eye level
- \_\_\_\_\_ Electric cords in surge protector out of child's reach
- \_\_\_\_\_ Water and liquids kept out of center

### Cooking Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Appliances in compliance with safety codes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharp implement use supervised
- \_\_\_\_\_ Electric appliances controlled by adult

### Dramatic Play Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Dolls, toys with no removable parts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Earrings large, bead strings unbroken
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plastic dishes, cutlery unbroken
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clothes hooks above eye level

### Writing Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Desks against wall
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lamps plugged into wall sockets
- \_\_\_\_\_ No extension cords
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharp pencils kept in center
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nontoxic markers and ink used

### Gross Motor Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Climbing equipment cushioned
- \_\_\_\_\_ Safety rules for riding vehicles
- \_\_\_\_\_ Loft at adult eye level
- \_\_\_\_\_ Railing slots close together
- \_\_\_\_\_ Balls made of soft material

### Manipulative/Math Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Tiny beads or counters removed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Materials with broken parts, peeling paint discarded
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharp or pointed objects eliminated

### Music/Listening Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Electric cords out of reach
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mercury battery equipment eliminated
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volume on headsets, players controlled

### Water/Sand/Sensory Table

- \_\_\_\_\_ Water and sand at low levels
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spills cleaned up promptly
- \_\_\_\_\_ Broken, rusty or glass implements removed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Safety goggles used with sand

### Science/Discovery Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Children's collections covered with clear, plastic wrap
- \_\_\_\_\_ Aquarium, incubator wires out of reach
- \_\_\_\_\_ Live plants nonpoisonous
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pets, handled gently, cages clean

### Woodworking Center

- \_\_\_\_\_ Small adult-sized tools used, supervised
- \_\_\_\_\_ Safety goggles used
- \_\_\_\_\_ Safety rules enforced

### General Room Condition

- \_\_\_\_\_ Floor covering smooth, unbroken
- \_\_\_\_\_ Heating pipes covered, sectioned off
- \_\_\_\_\_ Smoke detectors, fire extinguishers okay
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharp corners of dividers padded

**Figure 1.3** Learning Center Safety Checklist

Source: Adapted from *Safety in Preschool Programs*, Janice J. Beaty, 2004, Columbus, OH: Pearson Education, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Be sure your rugs and carpeting lie flat. Wrinkles in carpets cause tripping. Area rugs should have nonskid backing. Use carpets where children will be sitting and playing on the floor. Loop pile carpeting is especially good because it retains its appearance and is easily accessible for wheelchairs. In eating and art areas where spills are likely, washable floor coverings are more practical.

### *Inclusion*

Check the physical environment of your classroom to see if you need to modify it for children with special needs. You may need shelves or water containers at special heights for children with physical challenges. Place colorful footprint cutouts or wide colored tape on the floors to identify routes to different areas of the classroom.

## **Keep Outdoor Playground Safe and Secure**

Select outdoor play equipment with care, making sure it is developmentally appropriate for preschool children in size, usage, and location. Swings are no longer recommended on playgrounds for children aged 3–5 because of safety issues. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends a minimum 8-foot safety zone around each play unit, such as slides or climbers, as well as a resilient safety surface under and around each unit. A cushioning of sand, wood chips, shredded bark, or special mats may be used, but grass, dirt, concrete, or blacktop are not acceptable.



Suzanne Clouzeau/Pearson Education

*Woodchips cushion the area at the end of the slide.*



Use child-size equipment with railings and platforms on the slides. Climbing and sliding equipment should be securely anchored in the ground with buried concrete footers. Eliminate dangerous equipment such as most merry-go-rounds, swings, trampolines, and teeter-totters (seesaws). The teeter-totter is a dangerous piece of playground equipment for preschoolers. A young child can be thrown off even a small teeter-totter when the child at the lower end jumps off unexpectedly. The safe use of a teeter-totter is too complex a concept for most 3- and 4-year-olds to learn; most teachers prefer not to have them.

Too many accidents have occurred on or around swings when adults were not looking. Even when swing seats are made of safe materials, their movement can be hazardous for children walking behind them.

Most merry-go-rounds are too difficult for most preschool children to use safely. Getting on and getting off when traditional merry-go-rounds are moving can throw children to the ground; trying to stay on when they are spinning fast is beyond the capabilities of many preschoolers. Even supervising adults have difficulty preventing spills when merry-go-rounds are going. The trike-riding merry-go-round in the photo is an exception and can be used safely with supervision.

Is the equipment on your playground in safe condition? Check to make sure there are no loose parts, sharp edges, or slivers. There also should be no spaces or **protrusions** where children's heads or body parts can become entrapped or their clothing entangled. Safety product guidelines are available from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Here are the NAEYC Curriculum criteria.



Benjamin Laframboise/Pearson Education

*This trike-riding merry-go-round is safer than most.*

**NAEYC Curriculum Criteria Outdoor Environment**

(Describe how your program meets the following criteria:)

Outdoor play areas designed with equipment that is age and developmentally appropriate and that is located in clearly defined spaces within semiprivate areas where children can play alone or with a friend, accommodate ...


Motor experiences such as running, climbing, balancing, riding, jumping, crawling, scooting or swinging.

Sandboxes are constructed to allow for drainage; are covered when not in use; are cleaned of foreign matter on a regular basis; sand replaced as often as necessary.

Play area protects children from falls; resilient surfacing should extend 6 feet beyond limits of stationary equipment.

Protects children from catch points, sharp points, and protruding hardware, entrapment, tripping hazards, excessive wind and direct sunlight.

*Source:* NAEYC. (2008) NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria: The Mark of Quality in Early Childhood Education. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Copyright © 2008®. Reprinted with permission.

 Watch this video of two children playing in a large park. What safety features would you need to be concerned with if similar equipment was in an early childhood playground? How would you help these two children to be safe as they played?

You as a teacher, teaching assistant, or student intern are an especially important safety feature on the playground. You must accompany children whenever they go outside, preceding them to the playground and making sure conditions are safe for them to follow. Should there be a strange animal or person on the grounds, you will then be able to address the situation, sending the children back inside if necessary. While the children play you should be an alert observer, not spending time visiting another adult, but watching for possible dangerous situations among children on the climbing or sliding equipment.

Finally, the playground should be properly fenced off from roads, driveways, or parking lots. Each time you use the playground, make sure to check it first for broken glass or other dangerous debris. Your children deserve a fun-to-use, hazard-free playground. A child can serve as an assistant playground inspector to help you survey the playground daily using the checklist in Figure 1.4.

Using trikes, scooters, and other riding equipment can be an exciting experience if done safely. Child-size bike helmets should be used when riding, and removed as soon as the child gets off the equipment to prevent getting snagged in other equipment. Some states provide free safety education programs and materials with helmet fitting and distribution to children in need.

### **Inclusion**

Use your ingenuity to find ways to include children with limited physical abilities in playground activities. Did you think a child with impaired vision would not be

### Figure 1.4 Outdoor Playground Checklist

Source: From Janice J. Beaty, *Skills for Preschool Teachers, 9e*. Copyright © 2012 by Pearson Education, Inc.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Playground enclosed with fence
- \_\_\_\_\_ Debris, broken glass removed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mushrooms, poisonous plants, berries removed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tripping hazards such as rocks, holes corrected
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cushioning under climbers, slides appropriate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Large equipment anchored properly with buried footers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Slides and other metal equipment not rusty
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wooden equipment not splintery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Railings around high platforms with slats close together
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sharp edges, missing or loose parts corrected
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sand boxes covered when not in use
- \_\_\_\_\_ Young child-size equipment, riding toys used
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate supervision when in use

able to ride a trike? Flynn and Kieff (2002) tell us that a beeper can be placed on the back of the tricycle of another child, and the child who is visually impaired can play “follow the leader” to the sounds he or she hears. They both need to go very slowly with you beside them as a safety supervisor.



### Books as Lead-Ins to Playground Safety Activities

Children can begin to understand safety if you introduce safety precautions on the playground by reading an appropriate book to a small group at a time. In the animal story *Chicken Chickens* (Gorbachev, 2001) Mother hen takes her two little chickens to the playground, but they are afraid to try the play equipment until Beaver helps them slide down the slide on his tail. Have your children look closely at the pictures to decide if this playground is really a safe place. Can they point out things that are safe and unsafe? Does anyone notice that the adults are sitting and talking—not paying attention to their children? Have them build their own safe playground in the block center.

Bike and playground books as lead-ins to activities include

*I Can Do Anything that's Everything All on my Own* (Child, 2008)

*Mike and the Bike* (Ward, 2005) [Includes CD]

*Queen of the Scene* (Latifah, 2006)

*Sally Jean, the Bicycle Queen* (Best, 2006)





## PLAN AND IMPLEMENT EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

As you plan for the safety needs of the children in your care, be sure to consider unexpected emergencies that may arise. These may include illnesses or injuries when prompt emergency action is necessary; weather emergencies when prompt precautions must be taken; and fires, floods, explosions, or earthquakes when emergency exiting is required.

### Emergency Illnesses or Injuries

Know your children well. Do any of them have chronic illnesses such as asthma or diabetes? Heart problems? Breathing problems? Seizure disorders? Allergic reactions? Bleeding problems? A health record for each child should be on hand in the classroom for quick reference. Plans for children with emergency health needs should be made at the beginning of the year with the advice of parents and the program health professional. Be sure to have emergency access to someone who speaks the language of every non-English-speaking child in the program. Have phone numbers for them at hand. Be alert to symptoms and learn to recognize signs that may signal an emergency. Know the location of the nearest emergency room and how long it takes to get there. Have transportation available at all times. Use the 911 emergency number when necessary.

### Preparing for Accidents

Post near your telephone the emergency numbers for police, sheriff, fire department, doctor, ambulance, hospital, and poison control center. All adults in the

Allergic reactions	Head injuries
Bleeding	Injuries, including insect, animal, and human bites
Breathing difficulty	Loss of consciousness
Burns	Poisoning
Choking	Severe pain
Convulsions	Shock
Dental emergencies	Sprains, fractures
Electric shock	Vomiting
Eye injuries	

**Figure 1.5** Emergency Management Conditions

Source: Adapted from *Skills from Preschool Programs*, 9e, Columbus, OH: Pearson Education, Inc., 2012. Based on Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs (p. 23) by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association, 2002.

classroom should be familiar with the location of these numbers. Also, post near telephones simple directions for handling emergencies, written in two languages if your program is bilingual. A list of children's home telephone numbers, parents' cell phone numbers, and the names and numbers of persons to contact if no one is home should be available near your telephone and carried in your first-aid kit as well.

All staff involved in direct care of children should be certified in **pediatric first aid** that includes rescue breathing and first aid for choking as developed by one of the following organizations: the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or National Safety Council. Such a course should include emergency management of the conditions listed in Figure 1.5.

Make plans with the staff about each person's duties during an emergency. Practice together to see how you can respond best as a team. Your program also should devote a staff meeting to emergency procedures and first aid. Keep two well-stocked first-aid kits available at all times, one for the classroom and one to take on field trips. Make sure each staff member knows how to use all the items in it. Figure 1.6 lists the contents of a first-aid kit as approved by the American Red Cross.

## Injury Safety Activities

Children can also become aware of situations requiring first aid by hearing stories about helping someone who has been injured or by playing doctor or nurse in the dramatic play area. You can read them a story such as *Love Can Build a Bridge* (Judd, 1999) about pairs of multiethnic children helping one another. One boy helps another who has been hurt on a slide, a boy helps a girl who has fallen while in-line skating, and another boy helps a girl who has injured her arm while jump-roping. Have them choose to be one of the characters and tell what they would do in the same situation.

<input type="checkbox"/> Absorbent compress dressing	<input type="checkbox"/> Roller bandages
<input type="checkbox"/> Adhesive bandages	<input type="checkbox"/> Scissors
<input type="checkbox"/> Antibiotic ointment	<input type="checkbox"/> Sterile gauze pads
<input type="checkbox"/> Antiseptic wipes	<input type="checkbox"/> Triangular bandage
<input type="checkbox"/> Cold compresses	<input type="checkbox"/> Tweezers
<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrocortisone ointment	<input type="checkbox"/> First-aid instruction book
<input type="checkbox"/> Liquid soap	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone numbers for children's parents
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-glass thermometer	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone number for poison control center
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-latex gloves	<input type="checkbox"/> Pen/pencil/note pad
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral thermometer	<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight
<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic disposal bags	<input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone

**Figure 1.6** First-Aid Kit Checklist

Source: Based on [redcross.org/get-kit](http://redcross.org/get-kit), Internet.



Suzanne Clouzeau/Pearson Education

*Be prepared to attend to scrapes and bruises.*

If a real injury should occur, make a note of what happened and when, the child's reaction, and your response. Pass such information on to parents and emergency personnel on your center's accident report form, and also keep a copy for your own program.

## Weather Emergencies

Violent weather can cause emergencies in which teachers and child-care workers must help protect children. When warnings for tornadoes, hurricanes, typhoons, lightning, flash floods, tidal waves, windstorms, and dust storms are issued or sirens are sounded, emergency procedures must be followed immediately. Different rules are necessary for different types of storms. Learn the rules that apply to your area, and practice them with the children under your care until they can respond quickly and without panic. Safety drills such as "Duck-and-Cover" need to be practiced when appropriate, as well as emergency exiting where necessary.



### Books as Lead-Ins to Emergency Weather Activities

Storms of some kind occur in every part of our country. Even if they are not as threatening as tornados or hurricanes, thunder storms may be just as scary to young children if they occur while the youngsters are in your program. Reading a picture book about such storms may help children talk about their fears and how to overcome them.

*BOOM! Big, Big Thunder & One Small Dog* (Ray, 2013) little dog Rosie is not afraid of anything, not policemen or firefighters or sirens on their trucks; not taking a bath or the shadows at night. But when thunder booms, she is scared to death and tries to find a place to hide where the terrible sky cannot see her. Finally she runs to her boy and huddles against him till the growling sky calms down and yawns. Have children talk about the things that frighten them and how they overcome those feelings.

Tornados are a frequently occurring weather emergency in certain states. Children need to learn what to do when warning sirens sound. If children enjoy the story of *Aunt Minnie and the Twister*, have them talk about how the lives of those long-ago farm children were different from their own lives. What would they do if they lived with Aunt Minnie today and a twister occurred?

*Aunt Minnie and the Twister* (Prigger, 2002)

*The Big Storm* (Tafari, 2009)

*Earthquake!* (Palatini, 2002)

*Tap tap boom boom* (Bluemle, 2014)

## Emergency Exiting

Certain situations demand rules and order. Emergency exiting from the building is one of them. Fire drills, earthquake drills, chemical spills, bombs, civil disturbances, or other street emergencies call for buildings to be cleared as quickly as possible. Children should practice this procedure repeatedly so that everyone understands how to do it without panic. Do not wait for a fire inspector to make this happen. It is your responsibility to yourself, the children, and their families to see that **emergency evacuations** are accomplished with ease. Figure 1.7 lists rules for emergency exiting of a building.

### Inclusion

Children with physical challenges may need special help during an emergency exit. Be sure your center is in compliance with ramps, railings, and handholds in place. Classroom staff members should be assigned to children with special needs to help them move quickly but safely out of the building. Emergency exit signs and directions should be posted in several languages if your program is multilingual. Designate a safe spot outside the building where children should always go whenever there is emergency exiting.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Line up children quickly but calmly                   | 4. Follow quickest safe route to outside        |
| 2. Teacher at head of line, staff member at rear         | 5. Assemble at evacuation site outside building |
| 3. Carry emergency duffel bag and daily attendance sheet | 6. Count to make sure all children are there    |

**Figure 1.7** Emergency Exiting of a Building

Source: Adapted from *Safety in Preschool Programs*, Janice J. Beaty, 2004, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. Reprinted with permission.



### Books as Lead-Ins to Firefighting Activities

Before emergency drills take place, talk with your children and read them stories in preparation.

*Miss Mingo and the Fire Drill* (Harper, 2009) is a light-hearted story of how Miss Mingo's class (of animals) learns what to do in case there's a fire. They practice exiting with hilarious results until they finally get it right. How could your children help Miss Mingo? Have your class hold its own practice drills.

Other firefighting book lead-ins:

*Firehouse!* (Teague, 2010)

*This Is the Firefighter* (Godwin, 2009)

*Even Firefighters Hug Their Moms* (Maclean, 2002)

*Stop Drop and Roll* (Cuyler, 2001)

*Dinosaur Rescue* (Dale, 2013)

Visits by a firefighter to the classroom and visits by the children to a firehouse are other ways young children can be alerted to fire danger. They also need to learn what a smoke alarm sounds like and what to do if one sounds; also what to do if they are in a room filled with smoke.

Pretending to be a firefighter is one of children's favorite roles. The books *Firehouse!* and *This Is the Firefighter* are fine lead-ins to such role-taking or to turning the dramatic play center into a firehouse. Be sure to listen to any conversation that goes on to see what children have really learned about fire safety.

## Emergency Evacuation Plans

It is important to plan for emergency evacuations ahead of time with staff, parents, children, and evacuation personnel. The school or center director needs to arrange

**Figure 1.8** Contents of Emergency Duffel Bag

Source: Adapted from *Safety in Preschool Programs*, Janice J. Beaty, 2004, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

- Bottled water
- Paper cups
- Snacks (crackers, dried fruits)
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Blanket
- First-aid kit and handbook
- Emergency contact information for each child and staff member
- Photos of each child
- Cell phone
- Cards with games and songs

for primary and secondary evacuation sites. Sometimes buses or other transportation may be needed. Parents should be informed of these plans when they enroll their children and whenever plans are changed. An emergency duffel bag should be prepared and be on hand at all times. One of the staff should be responsible for carrying it. Figure 1.8 lists the contents of an emergency duffel bag.



## PROVIDE A SAFE CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE THROUGH TEACHER BEHAVIOR

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### Teacher's Behavior

The key to helping children respond quickly and sensibly to safety emergencies is the teacher's behavior. Teachers and other classroom staff must keep their own poise, remaining calm, unstressed, and in control. No matter how uneasy you may feel, it must not show in your face, your voice, or your actions. Concentrate instead on the children and how you can help them come through the situation without becoming panicked or hysterical yourself. Figure 1.9 offers some suggestions of what you can do.

### Dissipate Fear

In today's world unexpected things happen. Teachers and staff members should be as prepared as they can be for all kinds of disasters: common and uncommon, expected and unexpected, minor and serious. One factor common to all of these situations is fear. Fear is a crippling emotion that can cause panic and chaos among those experiencing it. If you recognize this fact, you can help to dissipate fear among the children through your own behavior as already mentioned. You can also talk with the children about the fears they may have and how to handle such fears. Fears such as the fear their mother or father will not come for them, fear of the dark,

- Be quiet: Help children to become quiet; become quiet yourself; whisper
- Use body language: Smile; nod; make eye contact with each child
- Come close: Touch children; hug them; hold their hands; put arm around them
- Use verbal cues: Use calming words; use compliments
- Laugh quietly together: Whisper a silly word or verse; make a silly face
- Hold hands: Everyone hold hands close together in a circle (standing or seated)

**Figure 1.9** Teacher Behavior in Emergency Situations

fear of loud noises, and fear of animals are some of the fears they or you might talk about, in addition to the emergency situations previously mentioned.



### Book as a Lead-In to Talking about Fears

Fear of the dark does not overcome the family in *Blackout* (Rocco, 2011). One night a blackout occurs in the entire city where they live in a tall apartment building. A little girl screams “Mom!” and her mother is right there with a flashlight. The family goes up to the roof of the building to see what is going on—and then down to the street to join a block party. Turn out the lights and have your children talk about what they would have done. Talking dissipates fear.

When teachers show children unconditional love, they help to dissipate children’s fears during times of crisis and confusion. The six examples of teacher behavior during emergency situations in Figure 1.9 are demonstrations of love toward children. This love in turn fosters reciprocal feelings of love and security within the children, helping to dissipate fear.

## Supervising Classroom Areas

Early childhood programs are fortunate to have more than one staff member present at all times. A teacher, an assistant, and sometimes a third staff member, student intern, or Foster Grandparent volunteer can contribute to children’s safety by supervising activities and areas where safety precautions are necessary. Plan during staff meetings what the role of each staff member will be. Include volunteers in your plans and give them a role where appropriate. Help them to model calm and unruffled behavior during times of crisis and accidents, and how to handle emergencies.

Overall responsibility for safety belongs to the teacher, who can survey the entire classroom as other staff members work with children in particular learning centers. Be sure that room dividers are not so high that they prevent you from seeing all of the children. If your program uses more than one room at a time, be sure a staff member remains in each room.