

COACH'S CORNER

Coach's Corner is a monthly DIEEC blog dedicated to providing fresh ideas for all early childhood education professionals.

Week of the Young Child

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Every year the Week of the Young Child (WOYC) provides an opportunity to reflect on the magic that is early childhood. Created by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), WOYC has been celebrated by early childhood education programs since 1971. Following the themes set by NAEYC, DIEEC put together activity guides for programs to incorporate into their daily experiences for the week. Although these activity guides are meant to be part of the WOYC celebration, they can be used throughout the year. The topics of music, working together, food/nutrition, art, and family can be incorporated into any lesson plans!



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Enhancing Daily Experiences

Music

Music can be used in so many different aspects of the day and it does not have to be a designated time!

- Transition times can be made smoother by adding songs or fingerplays. Each week educators can choose a new song to use during transitions.
- Music can also be a great way to introduce cultural diversity into your program. Educators can focus on music from different countries and cultures. Encourage families and educators to share music from their cultures. Multicultural lullabies would be great for naptime!
- Playing music and having a dance party can be a way to reset the day if it has been a tough morning. This can be done with children of all ages! Children naturally love movement activities and a dance party can give educators a moment to catch their breath and reset.
- For infants and young toddlers exposure to music can be as simple as having musical instruments available to them during free play. Homemade musical instruments are a great way to add music activities on a budget. Just be sure to check for choking hazards.

Food

Food and nutrition are already a big part of early childhood education programs. Here are a few ways to enhance meal and snack times.

- Family-style dining is a great way to engage children at mealtimes. It creates opportunities for social interactions. Family-style meals encourage children to try different foods and practice using their manners when they decide they would not like to have a particular food.
- Putting together a garden is another great way to focus on food and nutrition. Even if your program does not have a large outdoor space, you can still have a raised garden bed or some planters. Involving the children in the gardening process is a great way to encourage children to try vegetables.
- For infants and young toddlers, be sure to talk with them about what they are eating using positive language. Point out the colors of different foods and whether they are sweet, sour, savory, etc. You can also talk about the textures of different foods.

Working Together

“Working Together” is another theme of WOYC. There is so much opportunity for working together as a community in the early childhood education classroom.

In addition to working together on small projects and activities, consider having ongoing activities that children can work on over time.

- Legos or other interlocking toys are great for building structures that children can continue to add to over a period of time. Designate an area or table for a classroom “Lego village”. Each child can have a hand in adding to the village. Add in some small people, cars, animals, etc. for imaginative play.
- A classroom mural is another creative way for children to work together. Line one of the classroom walls with butcher paper and let the children get creative! Each child can add their own work to the mural. This activity is great for multi-age environments!

My hope, as always with Coach’s Corner, is that you find something useful or uplifting from these articles. But this month in particular I want to give our early childhood education community additional encouragement. It can be easy to get caught up in lesson planning, observations, assessment, and routine care. I encourage you all to take time this month to really take in the magic that is happening in your classroom or space. Yes, the days can be long but there is so much joy that comes from spending time with young children. Take notice of...

- Their smiles
- The painting they created using their favorite colors
- Their excitement in building “the tallest block tower ever”
- Their pride in taking their first steps or going potty for the first time
- Their little hands reaching out to hold yours

But most importantly, take in the beautiful community that you have created. Because we all know that our educators are the magicians behind the magic of early childhood education.

Professional Learning Experiences & Resources:

[Express Yourself- Exploring How Creative Expression Enhances Learning_\(Self-paced\)- DIEEC](#)

[Beyond Twinkle, Twinkle: Using Music with Infants and Toddlers- Zero to Three](#)