

## COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

Alison from England writes:

A good friend and myself are in the early stages of planning a preschool group for our community. Neither of us are preschool teachers but both of us have had a lot of experience in this area working as teacher aides. We envision the groups would run for an hour and thirty minutes, three days a week. Our plan would be for the parents to sign the children up for a term. The ages of the children would be 3-5 years old.

Since we would be using community space and running for such a short time each day, which key areas should we concentrate on? We were thinking of a themed topic each session. Perhaps reading a relevant book, then stimulating the children with music pertaining to the topic. What would your advice be?

I thank you for taking time to read this and would really appreciate your feedback.

Jean replies:

A theme base would be fine, but within that theme you need to be sure that you include activities that develop, social, physical, emotional, as well as academic skills. An hour and thirty minutes is plenty of time to run a preschool. Try to incorporate the theme throughout your day in all activities.

Be sure to set up a schedule that you try to repeat every session. Such as;

10 minutes -Free play (blocks, table toys, small toys)

20 minutes -Circle time and concept time (teaching concepts, numbers, colors, shapes, letters, etc. through stories, felt board activities, rhymes, and action games.)

30 minutes - Art or Discovery time – (crafts, painting, writing, water play, sand play, etc.)

15 minutes -Snack time – (with discussions on snack colors, shapes, textures, numbers, etc.)

15 minutes -Music and Movement time – Singing, dancing, dramatics,

Stay away from formal lecture type teaching and worksheets.

Try to make something that the children can take home each time, or provide the parents with a short newsletter telling them what you are working on this week and ways they can help develop these concepts. Also provide them with the words and music to all songs you teach your children.

I hope this helps, Jean Warren, Preschool Express