

Emergent Curriculum What does it mean?

Emergent curriculum is the expansion of knowledge based on the interests of the children. Ideally, a teacher can create interesting, challenging, learning experiences that respect the current development and curiosities of the children in their class. In an Emergent Classroom, this is accomplished by utilizing the children's expressed interests, the teacher's observations, and knowledge of developmental stages.

One of the reasons we use emergent curriculum instead of a thematic approach, is to capitalize on the "teachable moment". Children, like adults, reach a higher level of learning if the subject is one of interest to them. I do not know what children will be interested in a few weeks or months from now. By following their lead, I can bring a variety of learning experiences to the subject that sparks their curiosity right now.

By using the children's ideas to plan curriculum, we allow the possibility of studying more than one subject at the time. This often means that more children are being reached in an area of interest on a daily basis. Some of the ways we pick up on the children's interests are: watching what they play with and how they play, building on family events or vacation experiences, and listening on what they talk about.

When something piques their curiosity, it is more likely that the children will want to seek out more information on that subject. When the children come up with questions we can't answer, it becomes a perfect opportunity for us to learn together.