

New Mexico PreK Lesson Plan

*With Lesson Plan Procedures and
Examples of Teacher Support*





New Mexico PreK Weekly Lesson Plan

Program/School _____ Date _____

Teacher(s) _____ On-going Project (optional) _____

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Blocks</u></p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>Additional plan:</p> <p>Teacher support:</p> <p>Vocabulary Word(s):</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Art</u></p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>Additional plan:</p> <p>Teacher support:</p> <p>Vocabulary Word(s):</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Math Center</u></p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>Additional plan:</p> <p>Teacher support:</p> <p>Vocabulary Word(s):</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Dramatic Play</u></p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>Additional plan:</p> <p>Teacher support:</p> <p>Vocabulary Word(s):</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Class Library</u></p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>Additional plan:</p> <p>Teacher support:</p> <p>Vocabulary Word(s):</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Science Center or Sensory Table</u></p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>Additional plan:</p> <p>Teacher support:</p> <p>Vocabulary Word(s):</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Manipulatives</u></p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>Additional plan:</p> <p>Teacher support:</p> <p>Vocabulary Word(s):</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Other Center</u></p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>Additional plan:</p> <p>Teacher support:</p> <p>Vocabulary Word(s):</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Writing Center</u></p> <p>Indicator:</p> <p>Additional plan:</p> <p>Teacher support:</p> <p>Vocabulary Word(s):</p>



**Large Group
(as long as children are engaged; usually 5-20 mins.)**

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

Indicator:

Activity & Strategy:

**Small Group
(if done during play, done as a choice for children)**



Plans for Meals & Transitions
(PED: include phonological awareness activities)

Outdoor Environment & Explorations

Plans for Small Group and/or Individual Reading

Plans for Family Involvement

Accommodations/Modifications for Individual Children

Reflections: What worked? What didn't? What did you learn about individual children and group interests?

Plans: What will you do next week?



New Mexico PreK Weekly Lesson Plan Procedure

Purpose of the NM PreK Weekly Lesson Plan

The PreK Weekly Lesson Plan was designed to provide a format for PreK Lead Teachers and Educational Assistants (also known as Teacher Aides, Associates, Instructional Assistants or Paraprofessionals) on which to document the varied experiences they plan for and provide to PreK children in their classrooms each week. Based on the curricular recommendations for New Mexico PreK programs, this lesson plan includes the many aspects that make up a comprehensive curriculum that is “... likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children.” (NAEYC and NAECs/SDE 2003, page 2).

The elements of curriculum for New Mexico PreK include the integration of assessment and curricular practice. “At the heart of curriculum in New Mexico PreK are the New Mexico PreK Outcomes and Indicators. They are the goals about which all elements of curriculum revolve. They provide the foundation for learning and give reasonable expectations supported by research in child development. They are integrated into every aspect of the preschool day. They inform teachers as they plan, as they implement activities, as they guide children through play experiences and as they engage with children in daily routines. Because of this goal-oriented approach to curriculum, assessment is woven into every aspect of the preschool day as well. Teachers can be continually observing their children in a variety of experiences and collecting data to support conclusions about how each child is progressing.” (New Mexico PreK Curriculum Policy Brief, page 2)

Therefore, the design of the lesson plan includes places for teachers to write the NM PreK Essential Indicators that correlate with the play opportunities, reading, math and science experiences and large and small group activities that they offer. In addition, the importance of daily routines such as meals, transitions and outdoor explorations is recognized. And, the process of building relationships with families, making individual modifications and reflecting as the week progresses are also addressed.

The three page lesson plan is meant to reflect one week in a PreK classroom. Most of the plan is to be completed before the week begins, while the Reflection portions will be filled in as the week progresses and the teaching team has time to consider what has worked with the children. This combination of planning, implementation, observation and reflection is at the heart of best practices for young children and forms the basis for New Mexico PreK’s curricular approach.

Teachers are encouraged to post and/or publish the first two pages of the lesson plan so that parents and colleagues can be aware of the many activities, experiences and opportunities that will take place for the children that week. The third page of the lesson plan is meant to be a working tool for the teaching team rather than a parent communication piece. Therefore, this third page will remain in a folder or binder so that the lead teacher and educational assistant can refer to it throughout the week.

Sections of the PreK Weekly Lesson Plan

The sections of the lesson plan reflect what happens in PreK classrooms. They capture the complexity of implementing effective curriculum for young children and reflect the importance of observation and the integration of assessment and curricular practices. The sections include the following:

- Learning Centers provided for children to investigate and explore at Choice or Center Time
- Large and Small Group Times
- Daily routines of meals, transitions and small group and individual reading
- Plans for family involvement and individual modifications
- Teacher reflections

Learning Centers

The first page shows eight learning centers with room for an additional one as needed. Teachers are welcome to add additional classroom areas in the blank space provided (Music, Listening Center, etc.) These centers reflect the recommendations for arranging the environment and providing materials for the most important part of the NM PreK child's day: ample time for investigation, exploration, choice and play. This section is designed to promote intentional teaching as children engage in Choice Time or Center Time. Rather than only listing specific activities or lists of materials, teachers also plan for ways to support children's learning as they play. The lesson plan attempts to capture this planning and facilitation by asking teachers to identify the following for each of the learning centers:

The Indicator

The teacher(s) choose one indicator (from the PreK Essential Indicators) that will be the goal for the center that week. While they play and explore children may demonstrate other indicators as well, but the focus on one indicator guides the teacher(s) in observing and interacting so that the assessment process is imbedded within the curriculum and all of the Essential Indicators are addressed over time.

Additional Plan

The teacher(s) may want to provide some additional materials, ideas or suggestions to the children beyond the basic possibilities for use of the materials in that center. This additional plan may not happen every week in every center. Instead, it will be based on teachers' observations and reflections about the success of the children's interactions in the center and what next steps might be best.

Teacher Support

As teachers facilitate children's engagement in investigation, exploration, choice and play, they can choose from a variety of support strategies. By documenting them on the lesson plan, teachers are providing direction for their involvement with the children in that area. They may also choose additional strategies as the experience unfolds and they respond to the children's needs. Many support strategies from which teachers can choose are shared later in this document.

Vocabulary Word(s)

To support language development (which is the basis for all literacy learning) for PreK children, teachers converse with children as they investigate in the learning centers. Many of the opportunities planned for children in the centers will include possibilities for introducing new vocabulary words. Teachers are asked to write these words on the plan so that they are reminding themselves to use these words in meaningful ways as they interact with children at play. It is not necessary to have new vocabulary words for every single learning center each week. Instead, such words are written on the plan when appropriate to the plan for that area. Using children's home language whenever possible is an important aspect of NM PreK.

Large and Small Group Times

The second page of the New Mexico PreK Weekly Lesson Plan provides a space for teachers to plan for their small and large group activities. **Large group** should be as long as the children are actively engaged and interested (this usually lasts for 5-20 minutes). Teachers generally lead the large group activity and also welcome children's active participation through movement, singing, comments, ideas and questions. Teachers are continually observing to determine the children's interest and engagement. When wiggles and off-task behavior occur, the large group time is ended and children are invited to move into more active experiences such as Choice Time or Outdoor Time. Again, teachers will identify Essential Indicators as goals for the large group experience and will include the planned activity and support strategies that they will use.

Small groups provide teachers an opportunity to work with children more directly than large groups and thus enable them to individualize the activity to each child's capabilities and interests. Small group activities may take place during a designated time in the daily routine when the Lead Teacher and Educational Assistant each work with one-half of the children for ten to fifteen minutes. Or, small group activities may take place during Center Time. If done at Center Time, teachers invite but do not require children to participate. One of the important aspects of Center Time is choice-making for children so that they choose activities in which they become deeply engaged. A small group activity may be one of the choices offered. It is not required that small group activities be done daily. Adding them as possibilities in the daily schedule on two or three days of the week is another option. Again, teachers will identify Essential Indicators as goals for the small group experience and will include the planned activity and support strategies that they will use.

Daily Routines (meals, transitions and small group and individual reading)

The top part of the third page of the New Mexico PreK Weekly Lesson Plan is designed to help teachers be intentional during all parts of their daily routine. PreK teachers can weave the Essential Indicators into children's experiences in these routines and thus gather useful information about children's development. **Meal times** (whether breakfast, lunch or snack) provide excellent opportunities for teachers to talk with children and to encourage conversation among them in order to learn more about their thinking, learning and ability to communicate. Teachers can listen and observe in order to learn more about many of the Essential Indicators through such conversations. Conversing in children's home language as much as possible is recommended in NM PreK.

Transition times (such as choosing centers, moving to wash hands or pack up to go home, and clean up time) can be challenging for children and adults. Pre-planning for these times pays off by identifying ways to keep children actively engaged while moving from one activity to another. Songs, fingerplays and games to promote phonological awareness and numeracy can be planned for to make transitions go more smoothly. (Remember that ideally transition times should be brief and not include long waiting periods for the children.)

Outdoor time is an extension of the classroom. Planning for the playground is just as important as planning indoor activities. Teachers can identify what kinds of materials they will bring outside to enrich children's experiences, and what type of large motor games to introduce. And again, they can weave Essential Indicators into outdoor activities so that they learn more about what each child can do.

Research tells us that **reading to children in small groups or individually** is most effective. Busy teachers often forget to do this and only read to children during large group time. Having a small group/individual reading section on the lesson plan is a reminder to make time for this important component of early childhood learning. Teachers may want to use this box to identify particular children to read to, or to set aside a particular part of their day to focus on small group and individual reading.

Plans for Family Involvement and Individual Accommodations/Modifications

Accommodations/Modifications for individual children are important to plan for, especially for those children with IEPs or otherwise identified special needs. Typically developing children also benefit from individualized support. Be sure to consider confidentiality. Some teachers develop a code system to identify children without using names or initials.

Family involvement is a crucial component of any PreK program and planning for it helps teachers make sure to address it. Teachers may use this box to list strategies to encourage family involvement and/or record current family involvement.

Teacher Reflections

Reflection is an important part of the planning process and another key component of quality in NM PreK. As teachers implement the plans for the Learning Centers, Large and Small Group Times and

Daily Routines, they observe the children in action to determine where their plans were successful and note where challenges arose for children.

Based on the answers to these questions, teachers then make **plans for the next week**. Successful centers, group times or routines may not need to be changed every week while areas where challenges occurred will need to be addressed. Keeping goals in mind, and helping children to learn and grow is always at the core of this planning, implementation, observation and reflection cycle.

Accompanying Documents to the New Mexico PreK Weekly Lesson Plan

In addition to this set of procedures, accompanying documents include the following:

“Examples of Teacher Support in Centers, Group Times and Daily Routines”

“Ideas for Individual Modifications and Family Involvement”

“A Selection of Sample New Mexico PreK Weekly Lesson Plans”

The Process for Completing the PreK Weekly Lesson Plan

Step 1: Fill out the Basic Information

-**Program/School:** Fill in the name of the program, school and/or classroom

-**Date:** Fill in the week of the lesson plan

-**Teachers:** List all teachers working in the classroom

-**On-going projects (optional):** If you are working on an on-going project (such as learning about water, or insects) write the topic or focus of your project here. It is not necessary to identify an on-going project for every week’s plan.

Step 2: Write the Indicator, Additional Plans. Teacher Support and Vocabulary Word(s) for the Learning Centers for the Week

- For the **Indicator**, choose one PreK Essential Indicator to be the goal in each learning center. Rather than listing indicators by number, use key words to describe them. For example, for Indicator 1 write “eye-hand coordination” and for Indicator 8 write “scribbles or writes.” (Using

the parent-friendly language of the EI's is helpful in determining what to write on the lesson plan).

-For the **Teacher Support** section, teachers will think about how they will interact with the children in order to meet the stated indicator goal and choose one of the Teacher Support Possibilities on the following page to write on the plan. (More specific examples are given in the accompanying document "Examples of Teacher Support in Centers, Group Times and Daily Routines.")

Teacher Support Possibilities

Choose from the following strategies (based on Developmentally Appropriate Practice by Copple and Bredekamp 2009 pages 36-37) when planning for **teacher support**.

- **Acknowledge what the children are doing or saying**
 - Use materials in the same way as children do
 - Photograph or document children's work in some way

- **Encourage their efforts**
 - Explore and investigate alongside the children

- **Give specific feedback**
 - Make comments that focus on children's actions

- **Model attitudes and behavior toward others**

- **Model problem solving**
 - Offer hints or clues
 - Offer additional materials to support problem solving

- **Demonstrate to show the correct way to do something**

- **Create or add challenge**
 - Pose problems
 - Add complexity to children's play

- **Ask questions that provoke children's thinking**
 - Ask children about their intentions, ideas and plans
 - Encourage children to try to answer their own questions
 - Record children's ideas and theories (and refer back to them)

- **Offer assistance until the child can do it himself**
 - Refer children to one another for help
 - Pair children up according to skills and interests

- **Provide information**

•Give directions

Large Group

-Teachers again choose a focus **indicator** for the large group time each day. The indicator will be a guide to the activities the teacher plans, the questions s/he asks and the concepts s/he introduces in the large group experience.

-**Large group activities** might include any combination of the following: singing, dancing, playing musical instruments, reading and acting out a familiar story with props, demonstrations of new material and introduction and discussion of new concepts. If attendance, calendar and weather are included, the time devoted to them should be brief (no more than five minutes) so that other activities can be included as well.

-**Strategies** will be similar to those in the range of possibilities for Teacher Support in the learning centers. They can be specific to the indicator chosen and teachers will also be flexible and willing to follow the children's lead if the activity goes in a different direction. (More specific examples are given in the accompanying document "Examples of Teacher Support in Centers, Group Times and Daily Routines.")

Small Group

-Teachers again choose a focus **indicator** for the large group time each day. The indicator will be a guide to the activities the teacher plans, the questions she asks and the concepts she introduces in the large group experience.

- **Small group activities** might include the following: cooking or baking, introducing new materials and concepts, exploring with manipulatives, creating with art materials, practicing math and/or literacy skills and doing science experiments.

-**Strategies** will be similar to those in the range of possibilities for Teacher Support in the learning centers. They can be specific to the indicator chosen and teachers can individualize the strategies to better fit the needs of each child. This is the benefit of working with small groups and can be very helpful in getting to know each child's capabilities. (More specific examples are given in the accompanying document "Examples of Teacher Support in Centers, Group Times and Daily Routines.")

Step 4: Plan for Meals and Transitions, Outdoors, Reading, Family Involvement and Individual Modifications for the Week

- When planning for **Meals** teachers can either write down indicators that relate to the experience (such as eye-hand coordination for pouring or conversing in home language) or conversation topics they may want to engage in with the children. When planning for **Transitions**, the songs, fingerplays, games and/or other strategies that teachers will use to ease the transition process will be written on the lesson plan.

- Plans for **Outdoor time** will include the kinds of materials teachers will bring outside to enrich children's experiences, or any large motor games they will introduce as well as indicators that will be a focus.

-When planning for **Small Group and/or Individual Reading**, teachers may want to use this box to identify particular children to read to, favorite or new books that will be read (perhaps related to the on-going project in response to expressed interests of the children). Again, indicators that will be a focus should also be included.

- Use this box to list **modifications for specific children**. For those children with IEP goals or otherwise identified special needs, this is the place to write specific goals for them. For all children, some examples might include following up on a child's interest in a favorite activity, pairing children who are good friends to sit or work together, offering to read a favorite story to a child, or offering adult support when a child is trying something frustrating, or providing tools that will help the child be more successful.

- Teachers may use the **Family Involvement** box to list strategies to encourage family involvement and/or record current family involvement. For example, "Marissa's mom to bring her guitar Tuesday," or "Send home note about donation items needed."

Step 5: Reflect as the Week Progresses and Plan for Next Week

- In the **Reflection** box, teachers record answers to several key questions: What worked? What didn't? What did you learn about individual children and group interests? This section will be filled out as the week progresses rather than in advance. Keeping this page handy in a folder or binder so that as teachers and educational assistants debrief about how each day went, they can make notes here on the lesson plan.

-Then they can refer to their reflection notes to make **plans for the next week**. In this box, a brief reminder is all that's needed so that teachers will remember which centers, group times or routines were more successful and may not need to be changed and which areas or activities were the ones where challenges occurred and will need to be changed in some way.

Examples of Teacher Support in Centers, Group Times and Daily Routines

To be used with the New Mexico PreK Weekly Lesson Plan

General Teaching Strategies in Implementing the PreK Weekly Lesson Plan

PreK teachers and educational assistants are continually making decisions about how best to interact with children as they engage in various activities and experiences in the classroom. They watch what children are doing and listen to what they say in order to determine the best ways to support and enhance their learning, play, exploration and involvement. On the PreK Weekly Lesson Plan, teachers are asked to plan for support strategies so that they can be focused and prepared to be intentional in all they do with the children. And, it is recognized that even with a clear plan, adjustments and changes will still be made. Children can surprise us in their responses to our interventions. Effective preschool teachers continually pay attention to the cues of the children and respond accordingly.

General Support Strategies

Some general support strategies are effective at all times and should be ones used regularly by teachers and educational assistants. These teacher actions will help children continue to be successful whether they are engaged in learning centers, large or small groups or daily routines. It's important for teachers to keep the following strategies in mind in *all* that they do with children throughout the PreK day.

1. Put yourself on the child's physical level (kneel, bend down, pull up a chair or sit on the floor)
2. Acknowledge children's choices
3. Take time to watch and listen
4. When conversing with children, pause and allow them time to think
5. Accept "wrong" answers and pose questions that encourage children to think
6. Talk through your own thinking as you engage in activities
7. Admit mistakes when you make them and tell how you will rectify the situation
8. Model kindness, warmth, concern, enthusiasm, curiosity, interest, openness and flexibility
9. Remember to enjoy the children. Relish each moment with them. Get to know each child well.

These general support strategies are important ones for PreK teachers and educational assistants to use at all times as appropriate. They are *not* to be written on the lesson plan but instead are to be implemented by PreK teachers and educational assistants each and every day.

Specific Support Strategies

The following support strategies are more specific in nature and provide a basic list from which teachers can choose for their documentation on the PreK Weekly Lesson Plan. Teachers can write these strategies exactly as shown here or make adjustments to the language to fit the situations and children in their classroom.

Teacher Support Possibilities

Choose from the following strategies (based on Developmentally Appropriate Practice by Copple and Bredekamp 2009 pages 36-37) when planning for **teacher support**.

- **Acknowledge what the children are doing or saying**
 - Use materials in the same way as children do
 - Photograph or document children's work in some way

- **Encourage their efforts**
 - Explore and investigate alongside the children

- **Give specific feedback**
 - Make comments that focus on children's actions

- **Model attitudes and behavior toward others**

- **Model problem solving**
 - Offer hints or clues
 - Offer additional materials to support problem solving

- **Demonstrate to show the correct way to do something**

- **Create or add challenge**
 - Pose problems
 - Add complexity to children's play

- **Ask questions that provoke children's thinking**
 - Ask children about their intentions, ideas and plans
 - Encourage children to try to answer their own questions
 - Record children's ideas and theories (and refer back to them)

- **Offer assistance until the child can do it himself**
 - Refer children to one another for help
 - Pair children up according to skills and interests

- **Provide information**

- **Give directions**

In the following list, the same support strategies from above are paired with possible comments to illustrate what a teacher might say when supporting children's play and investigation. These are provided to help teachers begin to consider ways to converse with children in order to enhance their experiences. Teachers are invited to think of other comments and questions that would help implement these strategies not only in the learning centers, but also at large and small group times and in daily routines.

- **Acknowledge what the children are doing or saying.**

"Wow, I see that you all built a garage for your trucks. It's got very high walls. You stacked lots of long blocks up to make those walls."

- **Encourage their efforts**

"Your grocery store is sure a busy place. You have customers who are shopping and a cashier at the checkout. Oh, and you're stocking the shelves!"

- **Give specific feedback**

"You have spent a long time on your Lego construction. I see you put wheels on your vehicle and you have some people riding in it. Where are they going?"

- **Model attitudes, problem solving, and behavior toward others**

"Sometimes, I can't figure out what to make with my play dough. So, I just roll it and roll it, and pound it and feel it with my fingers. I don't always have to make something, do I?"

- **Demonstrate to show the correct way to do something**

"If you want the water wheel to go around when you pour the water into it, you have to pull open the latch at the bottom like this. There! Then, it works."

- **Create or add challenge**

"I wonder if you could build something with all of the blocks?"

- **Ask questions that provoke children's thinking**

"What do you think would happen if we put water on the sand? How would it change? Would we need some different tools to work with it?"

- **Offer assistance**

"Would you like some help getting the marble run to stop toppling over? Maybe if we made stronger foundations with some of the pieces, it would stay up. I'll help you do that."

•Provide information

“You made an ambulance with your Duplos. Remember when we saw the ambulance that came to our school? They had a special bed on wheels didn’t they? That was called a stretcher.”

•And give directions

“We have lots of art materials out for you to play and create with at the art table. You may use glue or paste to make whatever kind of collage you can think of.” (from Gronlund 2010, pages 68-69)

Specific Examples to Support Essential Indicators

And, here are some examples of teacher comments and questions that support specific Essential Indicators. Again, these are provided to help teachers begin to consider ways to converse with children in order to enhance their experiences. Teachers are invited to think of other comments and questions that would help meet indicator goals not only in the learning centers, but also at large and small group times and in daily routines.

1. **EI #4 Converses in home language:**
“Can you tell me about.....(what a child is making, doing, etc.)”
“It sounds like you need to talk to Jose about that. I’ll come with you.”
2. **EI #6 Demonstrates comprehension of a story read aloud:**
“What did you notice in this story?”
“What did you like best in this story?”
“Do you have any questions about this story?”
3. **EI #8 Attempts to represent words and print:**
“I know that you are worried about your structure being knocked over. What if we made a sign...”
“You’ve been working hard in the writing center. May I see your paper?”
Acknowledge the child’s work just as it is
Provide writing materials in all classroom areas
4. **EI #9 Uses counting and numbers to solve problems and determine quantity:**
“Wow, that is a lot of blocks! I wonder how many you have there.”
“I’m going to try to build a tower as tall as yours. I think I will count the blocks as I go.”
“You counted 12 blocks!”
Count informally with children throughout the daily routine
5. **EI #13 Communicates ideas and/or feelings through creative activities:**
“Your painting has lots of colors. What can you tell me about it?”
“I hear you singing a very pretty song. Would you like me to write down the words for you?”
“You are keeping the beat in the music with your feet. In what other ways can you move to the music?”

6. EI #14 Uses senses to investigate:

“I see that you and Tara are working with the mud. What is that like?”

Join in the mud play yourself and comment on how it looks, feels, and smells.

7. EI#16 Culture from home, neighborhood and community:

“I went to the park on Saturday and had a picnic with my family. What did you do this weekend?”

“How did you learn about that?”

“April knows a lot about horses, have you asked her?”

8. EI#17 Cares for possessions:

“Good morning Arianna. I see you have hung up your coat and your back pack and you’re ready to start the day!”

“Where do you think you should put your creation to keep it safe?”

9. EI#18 Plays and interacts with various children

“I see how you all are working together to make the grocery store a success.”

“I wonder if Jackson would like to join you. He’s been standing and watching you build your block tower. Do you think he could help?”

10. EI#21 Increasing independence:

“Yes, I see the spill. What can we do about it?”

“You tied those shoes all by yourself!”

When you observe a child working on something (cutting, for example), allow that child time to try to do it herself.

Resources for More Support Ideas

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (3rd Edition), Edited by Carol Copple & Sue Bredekamp, NAEYC, 2009

Developmentally Appropriate Play: Guiding Young Children to a Higher Level by Gaye Gronlund, Redleaf Press, 2010

Educating Young Children: Active Learning Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs (3rd Edition) by Mary Hohmann, David P. Weikart, & Ann S. Epstein, High/Scope Press, 2008

Reflecting Children’s Lives: A Handbook for Planning Child-Centered Curriculum by Deb Curtis & Margie Carter, Redleaf Press, 2002