The Project Approach for Infants and Toddlers
Hello!
I am Laurie Jeffries

I am here because I love infants and toddlers!
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Activities in the toddler classrooms have many of the characteristics of the project approach as defined by Katz and Chard (2000).
Characteristics in Common

- Adults identify toddler’s interests.
- Teachers respond by bringing in resources and arranging for field site experiences.
- Toddlers learn words and concepts in new situations. (ball)
- Toddlers develop ways of investigating which they then apply to other objects or items and observe results.

Helm and Katz (2016)
Characteristics continued

- Toddlers recognize themselves in documentation and recall and reproduce experiences through play.
- Toddlers create and interact with representations.
- Teachers and parents of toddlers use documentation to communicate about toddlers’ growth and to provide insight into growth in quality thinking.

Helm and Katz (2016)
Differences

- Toddlers have questions even if they can’t verbalize them
- Investigation in projects with toddlers is almost always done as an individual activity or very small group
- Culminations are done as personal experiences the teacher summarizes
- Compared to more structured approaches, the project approach can be more appropriate for toddlers sense of time

Helm and Katz (2016)
TELL ME
AND I FORGET
TEACH ME
AND I REMEMBER
INVOLVE ME
AND I LEARN

Benjamin Franklin
Beginning of the Year Project

- Painting - A canvas project
  - An introduction to:
    - painting with a brush
    - all children can find a way to contribute
  - incorporates discussion, planning, negotiation, guided by developmental levels and styles of exploration

Wanerman (2013)
Beginning of the Year

- encourages gross and fine motor exploration.
- attracts children who do not often show an interest in art.
- encourages relationship building and group work.
- encourages planning and reflection over time.

Wanerman (2013)
Progression of Project

1. Begin with the largest tools of the project.
2. Start with monochromes and move to earth tones, then to primary colors, and then all the tones.
3. Provide one color at a time for the first few sessions then invite children to mix two or three carefully chosen colors.

Wanerman (2013)
Progression of Project

4. Choose the colors for the first few sessions, but invite the children’s input in color choices, tools.
5. Incorporate a variety of learning and working styles—gross motor work or predicting outcomes of color mixing.
6. Involve the children in simple research using books, the internet, and visits to older children’s classroom.

Wanerman (2013)
A class I monitor used a canvas in the beginning and continually added to it. It is now hanging in their room.
Phases of a Project with Toddlers

Phase I
- Possible topic emerges
  - Initiated by the teacher
  - Emerging from child interest

- Complete anticipatory webs on
  - possible questions
  - developmental tasks for toddlers*
  - Explore resources, field-sites available

- Provide many focusing activities and common experiences for the toddlers

- Decide whether topic is appropriate and practical
  - **NO** Interest low, not consistent with goals, not practical
  - **YES** Interest high, consistent with goals, practical

Phase II
- *Investigate**

Phase III
- Plan a way to tell the story of the project
- Share the story
- Review project and assess achievement of goals

*Developmental tasks: Can the developmental tasks that toddlers are mastering at this time be practiced during this project? For example, climbing, reaching out to peers

**Investigate: Examine artifacts, provide simple experiments; may or may not include a field-site visit

Key:
- Child Activity
- Teacher Activity
- Parent Involvement Opportunity
Phase I

Possible topic emerges

- Initiated by the teacher
- Emerging from child interest

OR

Complete anticipatory webs on
- possible questions
- curriculum opportunities
Explore resources, field-sites available

Provide focusing activities and common experiences for the group or class

Decide whether topic is appropriate and practical

NO
- Interest low, not consistent with goals, not practical

Teacher webs with children about current concepts and understanding

YES
- Interest high, consistent with goals, practical

Web or list questions for investigation: What do we want to find out?

Phase II

Reexamine anticipatory planning web and children's web to tie in skills and concepts

Prepare for fieldwork and expert visitors

Investigate*

Represent what was learned through writing, drawing, construction, dancing, and dramatic play

Revisit web or re-web, indicate what was learned, identify new questions, repeat investigation and representation

Phase III

Debrief, plan culminating event for students to share, tell the story of the project

Complete the culminating event or activities

Review project and assess achievement of goals

*Investigate: Visit field-sites, talk to visitors and other experts, examine artefacts, conduct experiments

Key
- Child Activity
- Teacher Activity
- Teacher and Child Activity
- Parent Involvement Opportunity
Phases of the project

Phase I

Getting Started:
Interest is identified - Squirrels
Provided activities and experiences
Decided children were very interested

Listed questions children had about squirrels.
What do you think squirrels eat?

- cookies
- cereal
- corn
- ice cream
- paci
- toast
- banana
- oranges
- apple
- popcorn
- peanuts

Do you think squirrels will eat?

Yes
- Maliyah
- Larissa
- Gabriella
- Katie
- Jennie
- Charles

No
- Colten
- E'Ternity
Phases

Phase II
Look at skills and concepts you want children to learn
- tie in what the children have shown an interest in with the squirrels
What experiences can we give the children?
Who could we bring in with knowledge?
Teachers revisit web to identify new questions, repeat what children were interested in.
Today we had our bug expert, Bri, talk to us about bugs!! We got to see live bugs, see how bugs see, and look at toy bugs!
Phases

Phase III
Culmination of the project-
Looked at the toddler’s stages of development to determine what was an appropriate way to conclude the project

Teachers review project- what was learned- goals achieved?
We watch squirrels.
We made a peanut wreath for the squirrels to eat.
The Squirrel Project

What do you think squirrels eat?
- cookies
- cereal
- corn
- ice cream

"Squirrels big tail"

We fed the squirrels some popcorn

We made a peanut wreath for the squirrels to eat.
What do you eat?
- cookies
- cereal
- corn
- ice cream
- paci
- toast
- banana
- oranges
- apple
- popcorn
- peanuts

The squirrels did not want to eat:
- Cheerios
- Pezels

The squirrels did like to eat:
- Cheez-It's
- Sugar
- Popcorn
Bri from Lime Creek Nature Center visited us. She talked to us about Squirrels.

The squirrels did not want to eat:
- Chips
- Puffs
- Cookies
- Popcorn

The squirrels did like to eat:
- Bananas
- Oranges
- Crackers
- Popcorn
- Rice cakes
- Waffles
- Apples
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was this a project?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-depth investigation of a topic worth learning about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The project is summarized and tells the story. The toddlers understand this story and they take ownership for their accomplishments.</td>
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Box Project

Early Head Start classrooms
Ages 1-3
Worm Project

Early Head Start classrooms
Ages 1-3
White is the color of milk and fresh snow, the color produced by the combination of all the colors of the visible spectrum.

You can also split your content

Black is the color of coal, ebony, and of outer space. It is the darkest color, the result of the absence of or complete absorption of light.

What Teachers know:
- Live in Dirt
- Need Dark
- Breathe through skin
- Eat dirt/dead leaves
- Fishermen use them
- Birds eat them
- Come out in rain
- Different kinds of worms
- Worms have different body parts

Possible Questions from Children:
- What do they eat?
- Why don't they like light?
- What happens to worms in light?
- Are they snakes?
- Do they have eyes?
- Why are they slimy?
- Can they live in sand or water?
- How do they move?

CC Gold Objectives:
- Attends & Engage
- Curiosity & Motivation
- Thinking Symbolically (Obs. Drawing)
- Compare & Measure
- Uses Scientific Inquiry
- Knowledge of Living Things
- Uses tools
- Comprehending Language
- Follows Directions
- Vocabulary
- S & appreciates text/ books

Worms

- writes to convey meeting
- represents through art

Big Ideas we want to be learned:
- Where worms live
- What worms eat, don't eat, compare to squirrels
- We can find worms.
Shoe Project
Shoes
We made shoe prints with paint!
We used shoes to stamp on paper!

Shoe Project
Bird Project
Bird Project
A big THANK YOU to Bri for visiting our classroom to talk about birds and to Lime Creek Nature Center for the hands-on learning materials!
Music Project
Music Wall
Bug Project

We have been exploring bugs!
Today we had our bug expert, Bri, talk to us about bugs! We got to see live bugs, see how bugs see, and look at toy bugs!
References


Wanerman, T., (2013). From Handprints to Hypotheses: Using the Project Approach with Toddlers and Twos
Thanks!

Any questions?

You can email me at: ljeffries@nicao-online.org
Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](http://slidescarnival.com)
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- Backgrounds by [Pixeden](https://pixeden.com)