

Plan a Thematic Unit

A thematic unit teaches children about a broad topic using related curriculum activities over a period of one or two weeks. Using your research and information in the chapters in this unit, you will plan a developmentally appropriate thematic unit that integrates several curriculum areas.



My Journal

If you completed the journal entry on page 410, refer to it to see what themes you researched or have used in the past. Add any additional notes about theme-based activities for children after reading this unit.



English Language Arts Standards

NCTE 7 Conduct research and gather, evaluate, and synthesize data to communicate discoveries.

NCTE 8 Use information resources to gather information and create and communicate knowledge.

NCTE 12 Use language to accomplish individual purposes.

Project Assignment

In this project, you will do the following:

- Choose an age group for which to develop your thematic unit
- Research and select an age-appropriate theme for your unit
- Outline concept and skill development objectives for the thematic unit
- Plan activities for each curriculum area in your thematic unit
- Determine ways the theme can be reinforced inside and outside the classroom, such as bulletin boards, guest speakers, family involvement, and field trips
- Create a resource and supply list for items you will need to carry out your thematic unit activities
- Observe a classroom using the thematic teaching approach
- Present your thematic unit plan to the class

Applied Child Care Professional Skills Behind the Project

Your success as a child care professional will depend on your skills. Skills you will use in this project include the following:

- ▶ Selecting age-appropriate themes
- ▶ Identifying learning objectives and skill development goals for a thematic unit
- ▶ Planning curriculum activities that support a thematic unit
- ▶ Extending themes into all parts of a child care center and routine and beyond the classroom
- ▶ Determining the materials and resources needed to for a thematic unit

English Language Arts Skills Behind the Project

The English Language Arts skills you will use for this project are research, writing, and speaking skills. Remember these key concepts:

Research Skills

- ▶ Perform research using a variety of resources
- ▶ Discriminate between sources
- ▶ Use the information you gathered to narrow your choices

Writing Skills

- ▶ Use complete sentences with correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- ▶ Consider your audience
- ▶ Use findings from research to communicate discoveries in writing

Speaking Skills

- ▶ Be sensitive to the needs of your audience
- ▶ Adapt and modify language to suit different purposes

STEP 1 Research a Developmentally Appropriate Theme

Select an age group (toddlers, preschoolers, or school-age children) for your thematic unit project. Conduct research to find different themes that are appropriate for your selected age group. Write a summary of your research that:

- describes the themes that are often used for your chosen age group.
- explains why the themes are developmentally appropriate for this age group.
- explains how the themes encourage learning and development.

STEP 2 Plan Your Thematic Unit

Use the results of your research to choose a theme and create a thematic unit plan. Your plan should include the following:

- Unit title, age group, and length (1 or 2 weeks)
- **Objectives.** Detail the learning and skill development objectives for the unit. Be specific about the outcomes you wish to achieve.
- **Activities.** Describe suggested activities for each of the following subject areas: math, music, art, science, social studies, dramatic play, indoor/outdoor play, and literacy. State how each activity relates to the theme and meets a learning objective.
- **Theme extensions.** Describe how you will integrate the theme into all parts of the child care program. Be creative. For example, will you create a themed bulletin board or plan a field trip related to the theme? How could you involve families in the theme?
- **Required materials.** Create a list of all the materials and resources that will be needed to conduct all the thematic unit activities.

**Plan**

- ✓ Research developmentally appropriate themes and summarize your findings.
- ✓ Select a developmentally appropriate theme for a chosen age level.
- ✓ Outline learning and skill development objectives for the thematic unit.
- ✓ Plan activities for each curriculum subject area and theme extensions.
- ✓ Prepare a visual aid for your presentation.

Present

- ✓ Make a presentation to your class to share your research and your thematic unit plan.
- ✓ Invite students to ask any questions they may have. Answer these questions.
- ✓ Turn in the summary of your research, your thematic unit plan, and your visual aid.

STEP 3 Connect with Your Community

Visit a child care classroom and observe how the teachers implement a thematic unit. Make notes about where you see the theme in the facility and how the teachers meet the thematic unit's learning objectives. After your visit, evaluate your thematic unit plan. Revise your plan based on what you learned during your observation.

STEP 4 Share What You Have Learned

Use the Child Care Portfolio Project Checklist to plan and present your thematic unit plan to your class. Your presentation should include visual aids created using presentation software or poster board. Share what you have learned from your research and observations with your classmates.

STEP 5 Evaluate Your Child Care Professional and Academic Skills

Your project will be evaluated based on the following:

- Depth and detail of research about themes
- Thoroughness of thematic unit plan
- Age appropriateness of the thematic unit plan
- Quality of presentation, including visual aid and speaking skills



CLICK TO IT • Project Worksheet Go to this book's Online Learning Center at glencoe.com for a worksheet you can use to complete your portfolio project.