

Core Knowledge Preschool Program

The Core Knowledge Preschool Program is based on the following key principle:
We can, and must, establish high expectations for all young children, recognizing that the rates and approaches to learning vary among individuals.

The Core Knowledge (CK) Preschool Sequence is offered as another practical step toward the Core Knowledge Foundation's goal of promoting greater excellence and fairness in early education. Internationally, the most successful educational systems teach a core of knowledge in the early grades.

Development of the Preschool Sequence

The Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence is the result of a long process of research and critical review undertaken by the non-profit Core Knowledge Foundation. The resulting CK Preschool Sequence represents a synthesis of exemplary practice and experience, both in the United States and abroad.

The CK Foundation has studied the many reports that have been issued in recent years describing the current nature of early childhood experiences for most American children; examined important new research in cognitive development and how children learn; looked at specific preschool practices in the U.S., including well-known models like Montessori, High/Scope, and Creative Curriculum; and surveyed the preschool practices of several other countries, including France, Japan, Korea, and Italy. This wealth of information served as the basis for the development of an initial draft version of the Preschool Sequence. The programs and practices on which this draft was modeled have been empirically validated with millions of young children elsewhere in the world.

The first draft of the Preschool Sequence was submitted for review to nationally recognized experts in the area of early childhood development, as well as content area experts in language, emerging literacy, and math. Based on this expert review, portions of the Preschool Sequence were revised and a new draft was field tested in 1996-1997 in several preschool settings. The draft was also distributed to early childhood specialists, administrators, and preschool and kindergarten teachers throughout the U.S. for review.

Based on the feedback from these many sources, further refinements were made, resulting in the present version of the Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence.

Coherent Content

With a strong focus on challenging but appropriate content, the Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence is unique among early childhood programs. It outlines a comprehensive and coherent progression of knowledge and skills in all developmental areas.

The Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence starts with the premise that children are always "ready to learn," as long as the teacher knows where to start with each child. Preschoolers build new knowledge and skills based on what they have already learned. A specific,

explicit sequence of skills and knowledge, such as the Preschool Sequence, allows teachers to guide a young child's development in an apprentice-like fashion. Taking into account the child's particular competencies, a teacher can then offer those experiences that most closely match a student's present level, while providing the stepping stones needed to advance to higher levels of understanding and competence.

To sum up, the content of the Preschool Sequence is:

- **Solid** — It is a comprehensive preschool curriculum that addresses all facets of early childhood development.
- **Specific** — It identifies explicit skills and knowledge that are critical to a young child's development, in terms of "readiness to learn".
- **Sequenced** — It presents skills and knowledge that progress from very basic to more challenging, so that children build new knowledge and skills based on what they have already learned.
- **Shared** — It represents shared knowledge. Only by explicitly specifying the competencies and knowledge that all children should share can we ensure access to an excellent and fair education for all.

Language-Rich Curriculum

It is almost impossible to overemphasize the significance of early language development during the preschool years and its impact upon nearly all other aspects of development, as well as later academic achievement. The challenging, coherent content of the Preschool Sequence presents the perfect context in which to build strong receptive and expressive language skills.

In addition to the very comprehensive and specific "Language" chapters of the Preschool Sequence, language skills are interwoven throughout the curriculum. A special feature called the "Language of Instruction" in each content area identifies essential vocabulary that knowledgeable and competent individuals use in talking about particular subjects. It is important to stress that these word lists are not intended for use in isolated drill or memorization. Rather, they are provided so that teachers can expose children to such vocabulary in meaningful contexts. While not exhaustive, the vocabulary listing provides a starting point, a suggested sampling of the language that we hope all young children will hear.

Correlation of the Preschool Sequence to the K-8 Sequence

The skills and knowledge in the CK Preschool Sequence are designed to correlate with the existing Core Knowledge Sequence for grades K-8. The CK Preschool Sequence provides a solid, coherent foundation for the content that children will encounter in kindergarten in a school following the Core Knowledge Sequence.

This information in this document is from the Core Knowledge Foundation website at www.coreknowledge.org.