

# Responsible Living in the Primary Program

## Common Understandings

- A variety of health and safety projects (for example, nutrition, dental health, hand washing) are designed to help children learn many personalized facts about health and safety; to integrate their learning into their daily habits; to plan and to dictate and/or write their plans; to draw and write about these activities; to read silently and aloud; and to enjoy learning because it is related to their lives.
- Teachers promote prosocial behavior, perseverance, industry, and independence by providing many stimulating, motivating activities; encouraging individual choices; allowing as much time as needed for children to complete work; and ensuring moments of private time alone with the teacher or with a close friend.
- Children have many opportunities daily to develop social skills such as helping, cooperating, negotiating, and talking with the person involved to solve interpersonal problems. Teachers facilitate the development of social skills at all times as a part of the curriculum.
- Teachers promote the development of children's consciences and self-control through positive guidance techniques including: setting clear limits in a positive manner; involving children in establishing rules for classroom living and problem-solving of misbehavior; redirecting children to an acceptable activity; and meeting with an individual child who is having problems or with children and their parents. Teachers maintain their perspective about misbehavior, recognizing that every infraction does not warrant attention and identifying those that can be used as learning opportunities.

*Children who are allowed to make their own choices grow to see themselves as independent persons who can influence the environment in which they live. They learn to see themselves as persons of worth.*

Wasserman, 1990

## **Rationale**

### **Children and Personal Development**

The goals of primary education are to further the intellectual, human, social, and personal development of children. Schools must provide opportunities for children to deal not only with subjects that are academically and culturally important, but also with subjects that are personally significant.

*Therefore, the curriculum must address the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions of human development.*

### **Children and Change**

In today's world, children must be able to deal effectively with change. The composition of society and the nature of the family itself are being fundamentally altered. Dramatic changes are also occurring in the workplace as we more fully enter the "information age." Further, we are witnessing an unprecedented expansion in the number and type of entertainment and recreation options open to people of all ages. Although these changes have some positive effects (proliferation of opportunities), they also have negative effects (social break down and individual alienation).



*Therefore, the curriculum must provide opportunities for children to reflect on, discuss, and predict the likely consequences of change as well as to develop and formulate strategies required for adapting to change.*

### **Children and Responsible Decision-Making**

Children increasingly need to develop appropriate attitude/dispositions and acquire skills and knowledge necessary to make responsible, informed choices so they can lead empowered, purposeful, and fulfilled lives. They also need to develop attitudes that allow them to take advantage of new opportunities and, at the same time, deal confidently with the stresses of uncertainty and change.

*Therefore, the curriculum must provide age appropriate opportunities for children to practice solving problems of day-to-day life through the use of decision-making processes that involve thinking about predicting and evaluating the likely consequences of particular decisions.*

### **Children and Responsible Choices**

To the extent that health is a matter of learning and making informed choices, this program's focus on physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual health can benefit children enormously. Health education is effective in helping children develop and maintain health-enhancing habits when it is begun early in life and experiences at critical learning periods. There is no doubt healthy children are more ready to learn and more likely to enjoy learning. Adopting positive health practices can reduce the incidence and severity of illness and injury.

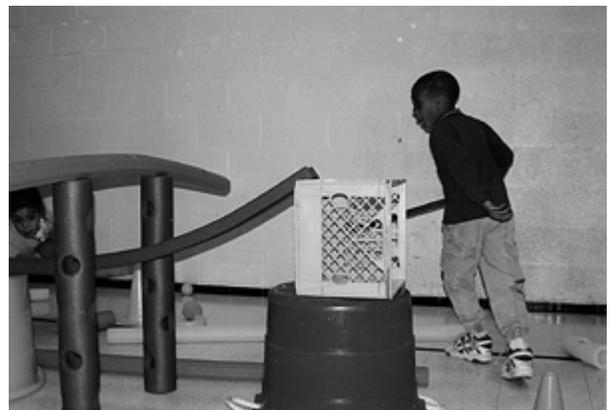
*Therefore, the curriculum must provide opportunities for children to evaluate the short-term and long-term benefits of their healthful decisions. It must also provide opportunities for them to assess their own decisions and adopt attitudes and personal habits that are conducive to health.*

## **Curriculum Overview**

The responsible living curriculum deals with the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and personal dimensions of human development in terms of issues that are personally relevant for children. In doing so, the curriculum integrates concepts and content from a variety of curriculum areas including health education, physical education, family and consumer science and guidance. The curriculum also includes materials that address contemporary issues facing children. Connections to topics in the traditional subject areas of social studies (the changing nature of social roles), language arts (communication skills), and science (reproductive biology) are also evident throughout the curriculum. The curriculum has been designed to help teachers maintain, reinforce, and enhance those skills, attitudes, and behaviors that enable children to increase control over and improve their personal well-being. This process involves:

- Care of self (the decisions and actions children take in the interest of their own health and well-being)
- Care of others (the attitudes children form and the actions they take to support one another and help each other to cope and grow)
- Care of the environment (the creation of conditions and surroundings that are conducive to health and well-being)

It also should be recognized that the inclusion in the curriculum of topics dealing with physical fitness does not reduce the need for children to actually engage in regular physical activity in order to maintain or improve their fitness levels. The school's physical education program and the responsible living curriculum are intended to be mutually supportive.



## **The Teacher and the Responsible Living Curriculum**

The role of the teacher is to facilitate student learning. In particular, the teacher:

- Plans and creates, in collaboration with children, a safe environment which encourages the exploration of ideas
- Examines his or her personal understanding of sensitive topics outlined in the curriculum content
- Develops his or her understanding of personal attitudes and beliefs, especially in those areas where the teacher's opinions may block class discussions
- Works in partnership with colleagues, parents, and others in the community to support and reinforce the objectives of the curriculum
- Continues to be open to new ideas and new teaching methods which will facilitate the implementation of the curriculum
- Responds to children's personal concerns
- Recognizes personal limitations and reaches out for help when a student is potentially at risk

### **Parents and the Responsible Living Curriculum**

The family is the primary role model in the development of children's attitudes and values. The school plays a supportive role by focusing on achievement of the objectives outlined in the



responsible living curriculum. In order that the partnership between home and school be maintained, it is important that parents be kept informed about all aspects of the responsible living curriculum by:

- Exchanging information with the classroom teacher
- Attending orientation meetings and workshop presentations
- Participating in lesson activities
- Reinforcing and supporting the goals of curriculum

### **The Healthy School Environment**

The health and well-being of children directly affects the health of the community. Similarly, the health of the community through its involvement in the commitment to health and well-being of children has a direct impact on the school. Parent and community involvement in health matters can provide support and reinforcement for the school-based curriculum. By drawing upon the energy, skills, and creativity of community members, programs can be developed to provide effective and meaningful support for the responsible living curriculum. A healthy community environment is a cooperative and caring one enabling children to meet basic needs in times of crisis and periods of development.



### **Services for Children**

Services offered to children reinforce the preventive aspects of the curriculum and provide support and intervention to those at risk or in crisis. Services may include screening, assessment, in-class support, placement, counseling, first-aid, immunization, treatment, and disease surveillance. A school-based team can play a vital role in coordinating the efficient delivery of services by school and other personnel as well as ensuring that appropriate referrals are made.

## Learning Through the Responsible Living Curriculum

### **Principles**

- The responsible living curriculum should promote growth in children's use of appropriate decision-making and problem-solving strategies in personal, family, social, and educational settings.
- The responsible living curriculum should promote growth in children' knowledge that is relevant to personal family and social settings.
- The responsible living curriculum should promote growth in children's reflective understanding about their own thinking and decision-making processes. Children should become increasingly able to select and apply skills and knowledge appropriately in personal, family, and social settings.
- The responsible living curriculum should promote growth in children's ability to respect differences.
- The responsible living curriculum should promote growth in children' positive self-concept.

### **Curriculum Content**

In terms of organization, the curriculum is built around four major concepts:

1. Individual awareness and responsibility
2. Relationships
3. Social awareness and responsibility
4. Lifelong development

In considering these concepts, it is important to keep in mind that they are interdependent, and no one is more important than the other. A common thread running through all four is decision-making.

### **Individual Awareness and Responsibility**

- Children should grow in their ability to identify and develop their sense of self. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Become aware of their physical, emotional, intellectual, moral/ethical, and spiritual self
  - Create a process to analytically assess and develop their sense of self
  - Describe how their sense of self may change
- Children should grow in the courage to see themselves as people who need to love and to be loved. Opportunities should be provided for children to:
  - Appreciate what is involved in becoming a thinking, caring, loving person
  - Appreciate the importance of love
  - Expand and affirm personal concepts of giving and receiving love



- Children should grow in self-confidence and experience, increased motivation to achieve personal growth. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Assess their levels of self-confidence and motivation to achieve personal growth
  - Value a positive sense of self
  - Formulate and implement a plan for enhancing their self-worth, self-confidence, self-esteem, and personal motivation
  - Reflect upon the role of love in the development of self-worth
  - Take steps to realize their personal potential
  - Reflect upon and assess specific personal attributes
  
- Children should grow in the ability to recognize problems, to generate and evaluate alternative solutions, to reach conclusions, and to take action. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Appreciate the need for problem-solving
  - Understand decision-making processes
  - Solve everyday problems through the use of decision-making processes
  - Demonstrate the ability to think creatively and critically in decision-making
  - Understand the relationship between decisions, actions, and consequences
  
- Children should grow in their ability to identify and develop responsibility for their own behavior and decisions. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Develop a growing sense of personal responsibility
  - Relate personal/family values and moral beliefs to personal decisions

### **Relationships**

- Children should grow in the understanding of the nature of human relationships. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Understand what constitutes a relationship
  - Examine the need to form and maintain friendships
  - Explore the positive and negative aspects of friendships
  - Develop an understanding of family structures
  - Understand the functions of families (for example, protection, security, nurture, support)
  - Appreciate the role and influence of the family as a social institution
  - Demonstrate an awareness of personal roles within relationships
  - Understand the varying ways that families function
  - Understand the rights and responsibility within family, peer, and occupational relationships
  
- Children should grow in an understanding of how relationships develop and change. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Examine the ways families grow and change
  - Explore the ways in which relationships grow and change
  - Appreciate the need for responsibility in relationships

- Build an awareness of growth and change in the individual
- Understand how rights and responsibilities affect family, peer, and occupational relationships
- Children should grow in the ability to communicate with other individuals, to develop healthy relationships, and behave in responsible, caring ways. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Develop effective interpersonal communication skills
  - Understand that people have different attitudes, values, and beliefs
  - Appreciate that each individual’s perceptions and expressions are unique
  - Develop conflict resolution abilities
  - Appreciate the role of cooperation and competition in relationships
  - Acquire an appreciation for what is involved in initiating and maintaining healthy relationships
  - Apply effective communication skills in discussing differences in attitudes and beliefs

**Social Awareness and Responsibility**

- Children should grow in the understanding of family and societal expectations. Opportunities should be provided for children to:
  - Appreciate how family roles, family expectations, and societal expectations influence behaviors
  - Understand how prejudices, stereotypical views, attitudes, and behaviors influence the rights and goals of others



- Children should grow in the understanding of their rights and responsibilities as persons who are both independent of and interdependent with others in society. Opportunities are provided to:
  - Develop an appreciation for personal and societal rights and responsibilities
  - Understand and develop an attitude of intolerance toward unfair, irresponsible, exploitative, and abusive behaviors
  - Avoid becoming the object of exploitative and abusive behaviors or the victim of irresponsible behaviors
  - Develop the ability to cooperate and work together for the benefit of the larger group
  - Analyze and evaluate membership in social groups
  - Appreciate the impact of the environment on health as well as the contribution individuals and groups make to a healthful environment
- Children should grow in an understanding of the diverse nature of society. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Understand the extent of American social diversity
  - Appreciate the variety of opportunities present in a diverse society

## **Lifelong Development**

- Children should grow in the development of attitudes and skills which promote health. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Demonstrate an awareness of factors that influence an individual’s health, the health of others, and the health of the environment
  - Develop and maintain a variety of good health habits
  - Appreciate healthful life-styles
- Children should grow in appreciation for being a lifelong learner. Opportunities are provided to:
  - Understand the concept of lifelong learning in terms that are personally relevant
  - Develop a more sophisticated perspective on their present knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors
- Children should grow in the ability to access information. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Develop information-gathering skills
  - Understand how to evaluate prior knowledge and access new information sources
- Children should grow in the understanding of support services. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Develop an awareness of kinds of support available in the family, school, and community
  - Obtain needed assistance from a variety of support services.
- Children should grow in the ability to set attainable goals for themselves. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Understand and appreciate the importance of goal-setting and follow-through
- Children should grow in the development of skills which enable them to adapt to and/or effect change. Opportunities are provided for children to:
  - Understand the significance of change
  - Become more aware of changes they experience in their personal lives
  - Maintain or enhance their ability to manage and adapt to change
  - Understand the continual process of human development and the impact of development on physical and emotional change.
- Children should grow in the awareness of diverse career pathways and honoring healthy work ethics.
  - Knowledge of diversity of work settings
  - Develop career awareness skills
  - Appreciate work ethic

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## Descriptors of Learning in Responsible Living

Early Primary	Later Primary
<b>Individual Awareness and Responsibility</b>	
<p><b>Dispositions...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates self-awareness:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Represents self (drawings, journals, orally)</li> </ul> </li>   <li>▪ The child demonstrates personal growth in self-confidence and motivation:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Applies previous knowledge to new situations</li> <li>– Expresses own point of view</li> <li>– Responds positively to encouragement</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Skills...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates the ability to persevere and solve problems:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognizes when a problem exists</li> <li>– Asks for help when necessary</li> <li>– Identifies alternate solutions</li> <li>– Recognizes the consequences of actions</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates an understanding that everyone needs to give and receive love:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Demonstrates an awareness of situations in which individuals show caring or loving behavior</li> </ul> </li>   <li>▪ The child shows responsibility for his own behavior and decisions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Accepts responsibility for own behavior</li> <li>– Acts responsibly in a variety of situations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Dispositions...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates self awareness:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Describes self in a positive, realistic manner</li> <li>– Accepts and plays a variety of roles</li> </ul> </li>   <li>▪ The child demonstrates personal growth in self-confidence and motivation:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adapts to new situations with confidence</li> <li>– Expresses and defends own personal view</li> <li>– Responds positively to encouragement and considers input from others</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Skills...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates the ability to persevere and solve problems:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognizes when a problem arises</li> <li>– Seeks appropriate resources for help</li> <li>– Solves problems using a variety of strategies</li> <li>– Recognizes the consequences of decisions</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates an understanding that everyone needs to give and receive love:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Demonstrates respect and consideration for self and others.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Descriptors of Learning in Responsible Living

Early Primary	Later Primary
<b>Relationships</b>	
<p><b>Dispositions...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates compassion, empathy, honesty, and respect in dealing with others:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Shows awareness of need for compassion, empathy, honesty, and respect in dealing with others</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Skills...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child practices effective communication skills:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expresses thoughts, feelings, and opinions in appropriate ways</li> <li>– Listens attentively to others' points of view</li> <li>– Responds appropriately in a variety of social situations</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates an understanding of the nature of human relationships and how they develop and change:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifies different types of relationships (e.g., peer, family, other)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Dispositions...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates compassion, empathy, honesty, and respect in dealing with others:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Behaves in a compassionate, empathetic, honest, and respectful manner in dealing with others</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Skills...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child practices effective communication skills:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expresses thoughts, feelings, and opinions in appropriate ways</li> <li>– Understands the role and impact of non-verbal communication</li> <li>– Listens attentively and considers others' points of view</li> <li>– Responds appropriately in a variety of social situations</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates an understanding of the nature of human relationships and how they develop and change:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Initiates new relationships and maintains positive, existing relationships</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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Early Primary	Later Primary
<b>Social Awareness and Responsibility</b>	
<p><b>Dispositions and Skills...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates a respect for personal and societal rights and responsibilities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Demonstrates an understanding of the purpose of rules</li> <li>– Identifies and applies safety rules in a variety of everyday situations</li> <li>– Participates cooperatively in social groups</li> <li>– Recognizes own uniqueness</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates an awareness that irresponsible, abusive, and exploitative behaviors are intolerable               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifies and reports irresponsible, abusive, and exploitative behaviors</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The child understands how family roles and societal expectations influence behaviors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Is becoming aware of social rules</li> <li>– Demonstrates awareness of how peers and family affect interests and choices</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Dispositions and Skills...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates a respect for personal and societal rights and responsibilities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Demonstrates social responsibility in caring for personal and public property and the environment</li> <li>– Identifies and applies safety rules in a variety of everyday situations</li> <li>– Accepts and assumes a variety of roles within social settings</li> <li>– Demonstrates an awareness of and respect for the similarities and differences among individual and among groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child demonstrates an awareness that irresponsible, abusive, and exploitative behaviors are not to be tolerated               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifies options for dealing with a problematic, dangerous, or unsafe situation (refusing, reporting, and leaving situation)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The child understands how family roles and societal expectations influence behaviors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifies and applies social rules in a variety of situations</li> <li>– Demonstrates awareness of how the community and the media affect interests and choices</li> <li>– Explores how significant social figures influence personal goals and choices (historical figures, role models, fictional characters)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Descriptors of Learning in Responsible Living

Early Primary	Later Primary
<b>Lifelong Development</b>	
<p><b>Dispositions...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child shows care and concern for others in need or crisis</li> <li>▪ The child demonstrates respect for the health of self, the health of others, and the environment</li> <li>▪ The child appreciates personal goal attainment:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sets attainable, short-term personal goals</li> <li>– Experiences satisfaction in attaining goals</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Skills ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child practices good health and safety habits (nutrition, fitness, hygiene, recreational activities)</li> <li>▪ The child understands and adjusts to change:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Demonstrates an awareness of changes within self and in the environment</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child identifies a variety of information sources</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dispositions...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child shows care and concern for others in need or crisis</li> <li>▪ The child recognizes the connection between a healthy environment and human health</li> <li>▪ The child appreciates personal goal attainment:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifies and follows specific steps to achieve short-term goals</li> <li>– Experiences satisfaction in attaining goals</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The child appreciates a balance of family, social, work, and school</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child practices good health and safety habits (nutrition, fitness, hygiene, recreational activities)</li> <li>▪ The child understands and adjusts to change:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identifies opportunities for personal growth with relation to change (for example, moving provides opportunities for new experiences and friendships)</li> <li>– Adjusts to new situations and experiences and applies problem-solving strategies</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge ...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child evaluates a variety of information sources</li> <li>▪ The child develops strategies for accessing reliable information and support systems</li> <li>▪ Career awareness</li> </ul>