

Tufts University
Department of Child Development
Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Program

Guiding Student Teachers towards Increased Responsibility

The following sequence of activities is intended as a guide to help student teachers gradually increase their responsibilities in the classroom. The state standards require students to take on the role of head teacher for a full week by the end of the semester. A semester is about 13 or 14 weeks--a brief period considering scope of responsibility and learning students must acquire in this time. It is important that students begin active engagement in the classroom from the start and are presented with new challenges each week or two. Here are some suggestions that will help Cooperating Teachers and University Supervisors to guide student teachers towards increased responsibility.

Weeks One and Two

The Student Teacher's responsibilities could include....

- Get to know the classroom, the children, and the teacher
- Observe and make note of the classroom schedule, routines, and transitions
- Familiarize yourself with classroom materials, the nature of the curriculum and any specific curricular programs that are in place in the classroom
- Interact with the children and begin to establish relationships
- Find ways to help out with routine classroom tasks (e.g., setting up, preparing materials)

Weeks Three and Four

The Student Teacher's responsibilities could include....

Small Group Teaching:

- Implement one-to-one or small group activities planned by the teacher.
- By the end of this 2 week period establish a routine where you will work with individual children or small groups of children on a regular basis (e.g., responsible for one area of the classroom during "center time," or assisting individual students as they are working independently).

Whole Group Teaching:

- Begin to have a role in a large group activity or meeting by implementing activities planned by the teacher or routines established by the teacher (e.g., take responsibility for one aspect of morning meeting).
- By the end of this 2 week period you should establish a routine where you have regular responsibility for one aspect of a large group activity, meeting, or lesson.

Planning:

- Begin to plan and implement small group activities that are relevant to the classroom curriculum.

Management:

- Pay particular attention to the expectations for children in this classroom and how they are communicated.

Weeks Five and Six

The Student Teacher's responsibilities could include....

Small Group Teaching:

- Take responsibility for independently planning and implementing the small group activities in one area of the classroom or aspect of the curriculum on a regular basis (*also listed in "Planning"*).

Whole Group Teaching:

- Begin to take responsibility for different aspects of large group activities, meetings, or lessons.
- Begin to plan and implement aspects of a whole group activity, meeting or lesson that are relevant to the classroom curriculum (*also listed in "Planning"*).

Planning:

- Take responsibility for planning and implementing the small group activities in one area of the classroom or aspect of the curriculum on a regular basis.
- Begin to plan and implement aspects of a whole group activity, meeting or lesson that are relevant to the classroom curriculum.

Management:

- Observe the teacher's management style carefully and begin to assume the role of an adult in the classroom (e.g., repeating directions, stating expectations)

Weeks Seven and Eight

The Student Teacher's responsibilities could include....

Small Group Teaching:

- Continue as in the previous 2 weeks, expanding your repertoire to different areas of the classroom or aspects of the curriculum which involve small group teaching.

Whole Group Teaching:

- Plan and implement an entire whole group experience including transitions into and out of the activity (*also listed in "Planning"*).

Planning:

- Plan and implement small group lessons/activities on a regular and ongoing basis, trying out different teaching methods and different curriculum areas.
- Plan and implement an entire whole group experience including transitions into and out of the activity.

Management:

- Gradually increase your role as an authority figure in the classroom; follow the teacher's lead in redirecting children and reinforcing the behavioral expectations for the classroom.

Weeks Nine and Ten

The Student Teacher's responsibilities could include....

Small Group Teaching:

- Continue as in the previous 2 weeks.
- At this point in the semester you should have had an opportunity to experience all the different types of small group teaching activities that take place in this classroom.

Whole Group Teaching:

- Continue as in the previous 2 weeks.
- Continue to build your role in large group meetings, activities, and lessons.

Planning:

- Plan and implement both small and whole group lessons/activities on a regular and ongoing basis, trying out different teaching methods and different curriculum areas.

"Lead" Teaching:

- Take on the role of the "lead" teacher for a portion of a day while your cooperating teacher is in the room. As "lead" teacher you are responsible for planning and carrying out the sequence of activities that occur during this period of time.

Management:

- Continue increasing your role as an authority figure in the classroom; as appropriate in this setting, begin to take responsibility for management challenges (e.g., particular times of day or children who are challenging)

Weeks Eleven and Twelve

The Student Teacher's responsibilities could include....

Small Group Teaching:

- *Same as previous 2 weeks.*

Whole Group Teaching:

- *Same as previous 2 weeks.*
- At this point in the semester you should have had an opportunity to experience all the different types of whole group teaching activities that take place in this classroom.

Planning:

- Plan all of the activities for an entire day.

- At this point in the semester you should have experienced planning all of the different types of activities that occur during a typical week in this classroom.

“Lead” Teaching:

- Take on the role of the “lead” teacher for a portion of a day without your cooperating teacher in the room. As “lead” teacher you are responsible for planning and carrying out the sequence of activities that occur during this period of time. You are responsible for transitions and for directing other adults.

Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen

The Student Teacher’s responsibilities could include....

Small, Whole Group Teaching, Planning and Management:

- *Same as above.*

“Lead” Teaching:

- Take on the role of “lead” teacher role for a full week (5 consecutive days – not necessarily starting on a Monday). As “lead” teacher you are responsible for all of the planning for the week and for carrying out the activities that occur during the times you are scheduled to be in the classroom. You are also responsible for transitions and for directing other adults. During this week your cooperating teacher will be out of the room for significant periods of time.
- Allow a few days after head teaching for transition out of head teaching role in classroom and to say “good bye”.
- Celebrate!