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Dr. Angela Searcy holds a B.A. degree in English and secondary education with teacher certification through the state of Illinois, a M.S. degree in early childhood development from Erikson Institute, with a specialization in Infant Studies and Doctorate in Education with a specialization in Assessment and Response to Intervention.

Angela has over 27 years of experience in the field of education is the owner and founder of Simple Solutions Educational Services and seminar leader and continuing education instructor at Erikson Institute.

A former associate at the Neuropsychology Diagnostic Center in Orland Park, Illinois, Angela has specialized training in neuroscience and is a nationally recognized speaker. She has been featured on WGN Channel 9 News, Chicago Public Radio’s Chicago Matters, Chicago Parent and Chicago Baby Magazines.
Classroom “Quality”

State Information

The richest lessons on QRIS development and implementation come from the States and communities that have built upon the experiences that have come before them. State examples are provided in each of the eight Resource Guide sections but are also organized here by State reference. By clicking on a State in this list, you can view a summary of the status of the State’s work to implement or develop a QRIS, or other scale quality improvement initiative; and the text of the State examples compiled from the sections of the Resource Guide.

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Alabama

Kentucky

Ohio

Alaska

Louisiana

Oklahoma

American Samoa

Maine

Oregon

erikson
Education is Always Evolving Like Medicine
"Observing Early Childhood Classrooms: What Does High-Quality Look Like?"

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Dr. Angela Searcy's Simple Solutions Channel
“Play is the Highest From of Research” —Albert Einstein

Researchers have linked play to better cognitive skills (Charlesworth, 2008; Davidson, 2015), oral language development (Davidson, 2015), self-regulation, prosocial skills (Corsaro, 1988), memory development (Levy, Wolfgang, & Koorland, 1992) and academic performance.
Questions to Ask

• How do you design activities?
• Are those activities child led?
• How are materials and activities meaningful to children and families in your program?
• How does your program show respect to different learning styles, abilities and cultures?
• How do you encourage language development?
Quality Child Care Tips and Checklists

What to look for in your search for quality child care

Play & Learn
Quality child care offers many opportunities for all children to play each day. Counting, reading skills and problem-solving are just a few things learned through play. Look for a provider who focuses on all aspects of your child's development including language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive.

Qualifications
There are different caregiver qualifications for different child care settings. Training, education, experience and credentials prepare a child care provider to meet your child's development needs. Request a provider's qualifications and references to learn more about their child care experience.
Sample Checklist for Preschool

About the Provider
- The provider helps children develop independence, yet assists when needed.
- The provider allows preschoolers to exercise newly-developed skills, while being patient with accidents or setbacks.
- The provider respects each child’s individuality with respect to learning styles, emotional expression, creativity, etc.
- The provider allows for both individual and group playtime.
- The provider consistently praises appropriate behaviors.
- The provider encourages social skills by teaching and modeling appropriate interaction.
- The provider takes time to give parents regular feedback on the child’s progress and daily activities.
- The provider allows for the safe expression of curiosity.
- The provider allows quiet time as an alternative if the child does not sleep during naptime.

About the Curriculum
- Activities are designed to develop children’s self-esteem and promote positive feelings toward learning.
- The materials and activities are meaningful to the child in the context of the child’s experience and development.
- The children have daily opportunities for artistic expression through various forms of art and music.
- Materials and enough time is available for creative and dramatic play.
- The toys are safe, age appropriate, and interesting to your child. They reflect diverse population (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, and disabilities).
- Lesson plans include weekly or monthly themes that focus on a special area of interest (i.e., seasons, animals, nutrition, cultures, etc.).

- Clear, consistent, simple rules are listed in a positive format (i.e., “Do...” rather than “Don’t...”). The provider sets a good example by modeling and encouraging expected behavior.
- The provider speaks to each child individually.
- The provider encourages language development by speaking clearly. The provider offers experiences to extend language abilities such as reading stories, circle time, music, etc.
- Children have outdoor play time regularly to develop large motor skills, learn about outdoor environments, and express themselves freely and loudly.
- Field trips and special events are planned periodically. Permission slips are given to parents to sign.

Continued
Preschool Checklist (continued)

About the Environment
- A number of books are available for the children. The children are encouraged to look at books during free time. The books are rotated periodically.
- The sleeping area is roomy and free of distractions. Each child has his or her own individual cot or bed, elevated from the floor.
- The bathroom is cleaned and sanitized daily. It is safe and age-appropriate for your preschooler.

Toilet-training equipment is available for children learning to use the bathroom independently. The bathroom routine is consistent with what your child is used to.

Other Topics to Discuss
- The program has a low ratio of children to staff. See the First Steps brochure for examples.
- The provider has worked in a child care program for at least one year.
- The provider has a back-up plan in place when he/she is sick or is on planned vacation.
Studies of rats who have the same neurotransmitters and similar brain structure as humans who were deprived of play had more immature patterns of neuronal connections prefrontal cortex.

Red Flags

- Directive instead of reflective
- Sitting at tables for long periods of time and/or restriction of movement
- Overuse of media
"Observing Early Childhood Classrooms: What Does High-Quality Look Like?"

1. Using materials together
2. The Bakery - Supporting Children to Succeed in the Dramatic Play Center
3. Skilled Teaching
4. What Does 'High-Quality' Preschool Look Like?
5. Inspiring Spaces for Young Children
6. Indicators of a Quality Early Learning Environment
Environment

• **Safe spaces arranged for autonomy and independence**
  
  (accessible materials, labeled shelves, ample space to move freely, child sized)

• **Play areas for blocks, art, pretend play, music and movement, sand/water, and books are clearly defined**

• **Ample space for children and adults to move freely**

• **Calming and comfortable**

• **Engaging**
Interactions

- **T** - talk about what they are doing, the child does and what other children and adults are doing

- **E** - extend children’s thinking with open-ended questions, prompts and conversations “What do you notice? “How did that happen?” “What do you hear, feel, etc.?” “What will happen if...? “Why did you group these together?”

- **A** - acknowledge, describe and demonstrate “I see you are making a tower” “I hear you talking” “I see you mixing yellow and blue together” “lets see what I can build with five square blocks” “I can tell you are angry your friend took your block”

- **C** - “You are working so hard” “Keep trying, keep turning the pieces” “You discovered a way to fit the ball in the tube!” Clear expectations “walking feet” “quiet voices”

- **H** - hone in on language/literacy, math, science, etc. in everyday routines and playful experiences
Let’s Stay Connected

Angela Nelson-Searcy

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