

## Creative Curriculum (6<sup>th</sup> Edition): “Cheat Sheet” for VA ECE Leaders

This “cheat sheet” is meant to be a quick reference for administrators when planning effective professional development opportunities for PreK teachers. It contains excerpts from the [Head Start Curriculum Consumer Report – Preschool \(reviewed in 2017\)](#) and incorporates an additional CLASS<sup>®</sup> crosswalk resource and most recent prices from the publisher’s (Teaching Strategies) website.

**Description:** [The Creative Curriculum<sup>®</sup> for Preschool, 6th Edition](#) provides a set of resources to support active learning through a variety of learning experiences. It includes six volumes that describe the curriculum foundation, interest areas in the classroom, 38 objectives for development and learning, and domain-specific teaching practices. The curriculum also provides teaching guides on six study topics with detailed daily plans.

**Curricular Materials reviewed in the Curriculum Consumer Report:** Complete set of 6<sup>th</sup> Edition: Volumes 1–6 of The Foundation Teaching Guides, Intentional Teaching Cards, Mighty Minutes, The Teaching Strategies Children’s Book Collection, The Guide to The Creative Curriculum<sup>®</sup> for Preschool, and The Classroom and Family Resources Online Portal

**Curricular Learning Goals for Children:** Volume 6: Objectives for Development & Learning: Birth Through Third Grade specifies the curriculum’s 38 measurable, developmentally appropriate learning goals. It also describes how to use the learning goals when working with children with disabilities or children who are dual language learners (DLLs). The objectives are integrated throughout many of the curriculum’s materials. For example, the Intentional Teaching Cards specify objectives and provide learning experiences to support children’s progress towards these goals.

**Professional Development offered by publisher:** Teaching Strategies’ ongoing [professional development opportunities](#) include a range of courses, offered both [online](#) and in person for an additional cost. One-day or two-day on-site trainings range in price from approximately \$3,465 to \$5,285, and the publisher works with programs to customize trainings based on program needs. Online, self-paced, courses vary in length from two to 10 hours, and are available for an annual subscription fee of \$165 per teacher.

**Curriculum Materials to Support Implementation:** The Creative Curriculum<sup>®</sup> for Preschool includes a comprehensive set of materials to support implementation. It provides a [Guide to The Creative Curriculum<sup>®</sup> for Preschool](#), which orients teachers to the curriculum materials and how they fit together. The curriculum offers six volumes to support teachers as they implement the curriculum (e.g., Volume 1: The Foundation, Volume 2: Interest Areas). Finally, the Daily Resources provide teachers with detailed guidance on what to do each day (e.g., Teaching Guides, Intentional Teaching Cards).

- **Fidelity Tool:** For an additional fee, programs can purchase The Fidelity Tool for Administrators and The Fidelity Tool Teacher Checklist (\$55 for a set of 5 each). Both tools assess the fidelity of implementation of the Daily Resources, The Foundation, and Teaching Strategies GOLD. Additionally, programs can purchase Coaching to Fidelity, Preschool Edition (\$210), which is a coaching guide to promote fidelity with specific strategies linked to items from the teacher checklist, and includes two sets of The Fidelity Tool for Administrators and The Fidelity Tool Teacher Checklist (which, again, cost \$55 for a set of 5 each).

## Curricular Supports for Teacher-Child Interactions

- **Crosswalk:** Use this [Crosswalk of The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Sixth Edition With the Pre-K CLASS®](#) to help identify curricular components and materials that best support areas of teacher-child interactions (e.g., CLASS Quality of Feedback).
- **Interactions that Extend Children's Learning:** Many of the curriculum's resources provide guidance and examples on how teachers engage in interactions that extend children's exploration, thinking, and communication. For example, the *Intentional Teaching Cards* and *Book Discussion Cards* provide examples of open-ended questions and prompts that teachers can use to spark children's thinking and encourage them to describe, explain, predict, and brainstorm.
- **Active Exploration:** The curriculum provides ample opportunity for preschoolers to actively engage in hands-on exploration. The curriculum highlights the importance of children having time for free, unstructured play daily. Volume 2: Interest Areas provides many suggestions for how to set up the environment with open-ended learning materials that promote hands-on exploration. Some of the structured activities in the *Intentional Teaching Cards* and *Teaching Guides* also invite children to manipulate objects and investigate concepts.

## Curricular Supports for Individualization:

- **Individualization Based on Interests:** The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool provides guidance on how teachers can incorporate children's interests into the curriculum's interest areas and learning activities. For example, the "Choice Time" hour each day allows for children to make choices daily to engage with materials and activities that are of interest to them. While the *Teaching Guides* have pre-planned activities for the first three weeks of each study, teachers are invited to plan the fourth week of the investigation based on children's interests and needs.
- **Individualization Based on Strengths and Needs:** Volume 1: The Foundation provides an overview of how individualization is central to the curriculum's philosophy. Teachers are encouraged to "Observe-Reflect-Respond," which is one way of responding to children's individual strengths and needs. Furthermore, the *Intentional Teaching Cards* provide specific scaffolding strategies to support children at different levels of a developmental progression. This allows teachers to individualize learning experiences to meet children's strengths and needs.
- **Individualization for Dual Language Learners (Scaffolding Strategies):** The curriculum provides specific guidance to scaffold the development and learning of DLL children. Volume 1: The Foundation offers a description of dual language development. Volume 3: Literacy provides a range of specific strategies to support children who are DLLs at various stages of English language acquisition. Furthermore, specific scaffolding strategies and supports for children who are DLLs are embedded throughout the *Intentional Teaching Cards* and *Teaching Guides*.
- **Individualization for Children with Special Needs (Teaching Practices and Interventions):** Volumes 1–6 provide strategies and examples of how to ensure daily routines and activities are inclusive of children with disabilities or other special needs (e.g., using visual and tactile cues, providing picture sequences). The *Teaching Guides* and *Intentional Teaching Cards* provide specific suggestions for how to include children with disabilities or other special needs in learning experiences (e.g., providing something to hold during large group activities to focus a child's attention, suggesting alternative materials for all children to participate in an activity).

### **Child Assessment Tools and Guidance:**

- **Ongoing Observation and Documentation:** The curriculum provides a four-step process for ongoing observation and documentation: 1) Observing and Collecting Facts, 2) Analyzing and Responding, 3) Evaluating, and 4) Summarizing, Planning, and Communicating. To support this process, the Intentional Teaching Cards include "Questions to Guide Observations." There are also specific prompts for observation and documentation throughout the Teaching Guides.
- **Standardized and Structured Assessment Instruments:** The curriculum encourages programs to use the publisher's Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System (TS GOLD), which is aligned with The Creative Curriculum® objectives. The online platform, MyTeachingStrategies™, features resources related to TS GOLD that describe how assessment instruments should be valid, reliable, as well as individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. The curriculum also stresses the importance of regularly assessing children's development and using this information to plan instruction.