

# 2011

## Curriculum Overview



Middle River Baptist Church Child Development Center



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The overall program and the *Child Development Curriculum* of Middle River Baptist Church's Child Development Center (MRBCCDC) are based on the following guidelines:

***Provide a healthy and safe environment with proper nutrition.*** God has entrusted children into our care. It is our responsibility to provide the best for them. Children are alert and ready to learn when they receive proper nutrition, rest, and routines. Children's sense of security begins when they know that they are safe and free from harm.

***Develop warm, caring relationships with children and each other.*** God desires to be in relationship with each of us. The relationships that we build with children will influence the kind of relationships with God and others later in life. Children also feel secure when they have a strong positive relationship with their teachers and caregivers. When caregivers develop a special bond with children, children become attached to their caregivers. Attachment builds security and helps to determine the quality of the relationships that children will develop with future peers and teachers. By building positive relationships with children, we help the child feel safe and secure, preparing them for a lifetime of learning.

***Respond to children's cues and clues.*** Responding to children when they are upset as well as when they are happy tells them that they are important and that they care about them. When we promptly respond to their needs, children learn to trust. Trust is an important forerunner to faith. We try to understand what children are feeling, what they are saying (in words or actions), and what they are trying to do. Hold and touch them; play with them in a way that lets you follow their lead. Interact when children want to play, and pull back when they seem to have had enough stimulation.

***Recognize that we are all unique.*** God has created each in His own spiritual image, yet he has created each one of us with different outer appearances, abilities, and personalities. We keep in mind that from birth, children have different temperaments, that they grow at their own pace, and that this pace varies from child to child. At the same time, have positive expectations about what children can do and hold on to the belief that every child can succeed.

***Talk, read, and sing to children.*** We surround them with language: conversing with them about what we and they are doing; singing to them, playing music, telling stories and reading books; asking toddlers and preschoolers to guess what will come next in a story; playing word games; asking toddlers and preschoolers questions that require more than a yes or no answer, like "Which one...?" or "What would happen if..." We provide reading and writing materials, including crayons and paper, books, magazines, and toys. These are key pre-reading experiences.

***Encourage exploration and play.*** We give children opportunities to move around, explore and play (and be prepared to step in if they are at risk of hurting themselves or others). We allow them to explore relationships as well, allowing children to spend time playing with children of their own age and of other ages helps them learn to solve the conflicts that inevitably arise.

***Use discipline to teach.*** The word *discipline* comes from the Greek word *matheteno*, which means to become a pupil or to disciple to teach. The word is positive. The question every teacher should ask is not, "How can I punish this child for what he did?" but rather, "What can the child learn from this situation?" To create an atmosphere of positive discipline, teachers must begin by



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being a positive model of a disciplined life. The way a teacher treats children determines to a large degree how the children will treat each other (Sanders and Bradberry, 2000).

***Establish routines.*** Creating routines and rituals for special times during the day like mealtime and nap time and trying to be predictable so the children know that they can count on you builds security in young children. As the child becomes secure, he begins to develop trust in the relationship. Parents, teachers, and caregivers become representatives of God in the child's life.

The *Child Development Curriculum* of Middle River Baptist Church's Child Development Center is based on research that indicates the first five years of a child's life are the most crucial for learning. It is during these years that the child develops the basic knowledge necessary for him/her to become a successful learner. The *Child Development Curriculum* was designed using Maryland standards of Early Education. The *Guidelines for Healthy Child Development and Care for Young Children (Birth – Three Years of Age)* was used as a guide to determine appropriate goals and objectives for our youngest children. The topics and indicators of the *Maryland Model for School Readiness* and the *Voluntary State Curriculum* are used to determine appropriate goals and objectives for our three- and four-year-olds.

Twelve thematic units are used to motivate learning. Each unit is divided into weekly themes. Activities targeting goals and objectives are included within the themes and units. The children learn by participating in large and small group activities which include theme related discussions; completing theme related art activities; listening to fictional and non-fictional stories; working with hands-on materials relating to math, language, science and social living; interacting with others and exploring interest areas during center time. Basic readiness skills are integrated into the themes. Learning is developed through teacher-directed and child-initiated activity. Research has shown that children *and* teachers must be active in the learning process. Effective teachers create a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activity, supporting children's learning in both types of activities (Epstein, 2007).

Christian studies are a major component of the curriculum. Basic Christian principles are taught through our daily interactions and relationships. Children begin to learn that God loves and cares about them through the loving and caring relationships with their caregivers and teachers (see 1 John 4:7-12). Children begin to learn that "God will supply all their needs" (Philippians 4:19) because their needs are met at home and at MRBCCDC. Children also learn about God through Bible stories, Christian songs, attending chapel once a week, and participating in morning classroom prayer. Older groups will join in group discussions about the following: God's creation; His love, care, and provisions for us; the Bible as God's Word; and the Lord Jesus Christ and His teachings about love. Scripture verses are integrated into the weekly themes and interest areas as appropriate for the children's age. The Chapel curriculum corresponds to the classroom curriculum unit themes and uses object lessons and music to teach from a Biblical world view.

Learning Centers are used to give children opportunities to practice skills through structured and unstructured play experiences. As the children explore learning centers they begin to assimilate acquired skills into daily living through play. Each center is designed to meet the social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual development of each child. Teachers can use this



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time to observe and assess the children's progress and to assist learning on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Learning centers include the art, blocks, computer, dramatic play, library, manipulative toys and games, music and movement, sand and water play, and science/discovery centers. In addition to indoor centers, we also have an outdoor classroom that includes art, blocks, dramatic play, science/discovery, and sand play centers. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* was used as a guide for the structure of our learning centers. The tables below list skills and learning opportunities that each area offers within the four domains of learning.

<b>Art Area</b>	
Social/Emotional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays with other children</li> <li>Shares and respects rights of other children</li> <li>Follows rules and routines</li> <li>Develops and demonstrates self-direction and independence</li> <li>Uses art media to express emotionally significant thoughts</li> </ul>	Physical Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthens small muscles in hands</li> <li>Coordinates eye-hand movement</li> <li>Uses tools for drawing and painting</li> </ul>
Cognitive Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learns about the concepts of color, shape, line, size, and texture</li> <li>Practices problem-solving and reasoning skills</li> <li>Strengthens imagination and creativity</li> <li>Recognizes and repeats patterns</li> </ul>	Language Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expresses ideas, thoughts, and events</li> <li>Asks and answers questions</li> <li>Uses words and expanded language to express thought</li> </ul>
Spiritual Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops Godly character traits by sharing materials, helping others, and taking turns</li> <li>Recognizes that God created the aspects of art for enjoyment and expression</li> </ul>	
<b>Block Area</b>	
Social/Emotional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays with other children</li> <li>Follows rules</li> <li>Shares and respects rights of other children</li> <li>Demonstrates self-regulation and independence</li> </ul>	Physical Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen large and small motor development</li> <li>Increased sense of balance while moving</li> <li>Uses tools</li> <li>Coordinates eye movement</li> </ul>
Cognitive Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop problem-solving, reasoning, and conflict resolution skills</li> <li>Strengthen math concepts that relate to shape, size, and measurement, sorting, patterning and counting</li> <li>Develop a sense of pattern and symmetry</li> </ul>	Language Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses words and sentences</li> <li>Asks and answers questions</li> <li>Participates in conversation</li> <li>Uses emerging literacy to recognize that print has meaning</li> <li>Understand purpose of writing</li> </ul>
Spiritual Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Godly character traits by sharing materials, helping others, and taking turns</li> </ul>	



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<b>Computer Area</b>	
Social/Emotional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows rules</li> <li>• Develops and demonstrates self-regulation and independence</li> <li>• Plays with others</li> <li>• Shares and respects rights of others</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for children to self-direct and self-regulate</li> </ul>	Physical Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses tools</li> <li>• Enhance fine motor skills as children use the keyboard</li> <li>• Enhance eye/hand coordination with the movement of the mouse and the action on the screen</li> </ul>
Cognitive Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explores cause and effect</li> <li>• Uses one-to-one correspondence</li> <li>• Uses numbers and counting</li> <li>• Bridge the gap between concrete and abstract thinking</li> <li>• Makes and interprets representations</li> <li>• Develops problem solving skills as children work through a program</li> </ul>	Language Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and follows oral directions</li> <li>• Asks and answers questions</li> <li>• Demonstrates alphabet knowledge</li> <li>• Participates in conversations</li> <li>• Uses emerging literacy skills to make meaning from print</li> <li>• The development of technical language</li> </ul>
Spiritual Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop godly character traits while sharing, helping each other, and waiting</li> </ul>	
<b>Outdoor Classroom</b>	
Social/Emotional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop body awareness and self control</li> <li>• Develop imaginative play skills</li> <li>• Follows rules and routines</li> <li>• Develops cooperative play skills</li> </ul>	Physical Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen gross motor development</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of texture such as rough/smooth, hard/soft, wet/dry</li> <li>• Develop basic movement skills</li> <li>• Develop balance in movement</li> </ul>
Cognitive Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop positional concepts/spatial relationships such as over, under, on, off, etc.</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of weather changes, temperature and the four seasons</li> </ul>	Language Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and expand vocabulary associated with the natural world</li> <li>• Use language to express feelings</li> <li>• Asks and answers questions</li> <li>• Participates in conversation</li> </ul>
Spiritual Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Godly character traits by sharing materials, helping others, taking turns, and working cooperatively with others</li> </ul>	



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<b>Dramatic Play</b>	
Social/Emotional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to construct an understanding of daily living</li> <li>• Learn about occupational and familial roles through role play</li> <li>• Adjusts to new situations</li> <li>• Cares for classroom and supplies</li> </ul>	Physical Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen small muscle in hands</li> <li>• Enhance eye-hand coordination</li> </ul>
Cognitive Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop problem-solving, reasoning, and conflict resolution skills</li> <li>• Uses imagination to pretend</li> <li>• Uses one-to-one correspondence</li> <li>• Applies old knowledge to new experiences</li> </ul>	Language Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks and answers questions</li> <li>• Expresses self using words and sentences</li> <li>• Participates in conversations</li> <li>• Demonstrates alphabet knowledge</li> </ul>
• Spiritual Development: • Develop Godly character traits by sharing materials, helping others, taking turns	
<b>Library Area</b>	
Social/Emotional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops self-direction and independence</li> <li>• Develop an enjoyment of reading and listening to stories</li> <li>• Develop behaviors prerequisite to reading.</li> </ul>	Physical Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop fine motor skill and balance to hold a book.</li> <li>• Development sufficient fine motor skill to turn pages of book one at a time.</li> </ul>
Cognitive Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate an awareness of the concept of print</li> <li>• Adjusts to new situations</li> <li>• Applies old knowledge to new situations.</li> </ul>	Language Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an understanding of written language and connection between words that are spoken and words that are seen in print</li> <li>• Asks and answers questions</li> <li>• Participates in conversation</li> <li>• Understands that writing has a purpose</li> </ul>
Spiritual Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognized that the Bible is a special book.</li> <li>• Develop an appreciation for the stories and characters in the Bible.</li> </ul>	



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<b>Manipulative Toys and Games</b>	
Social/Emotional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop self confidence</li> <li>• Follows rules and routines</li> <li>• Develops and demonstrates self-regulation and independence</li> <li>• Develops cooperative play skills</li> </ul>	Physical Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controls fine motor skills</li> <li>• Strengthens eye-hand coordination</li> <li>• Uses tools</li> </ul>
Cognitive Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance math skills (classifying, patterning, matching, counting, number recognition, and ordering)</li> <li>• Develop problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Uses imagination to pretend</li> </ul>	Language Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance language skills (letter recognition, letter and sound relationships)</li> <li>• Uses language to express feelings</li> <li>• Participates in conversation</li> <li>• Asks and answers questions</li> </ul>
Spiritual Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Godly character traits by sharing materials, helping others, taking turns, and working cooperatively with others</li> </ul>	
<b>Music and Movement</b>	
Social/Emotional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop self control and respect for the space of others</li> <li>• Follows rules and routines</li> <li>• Cares for classroom and supplies</li> <li>• Develops and demonstrates self-regulation and independence</li> </ul>	
Cognitive Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance math skills by singing songs that relate to numbers, rhymes, shapes, colors, the days of the week/months of the year, the alphabet, etc.</li> <li>• Develop memory skills (remembering and repeating words to songs and fingerplays)</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of patterns</li> <li>• Problem = solving</li> </ul>	Physical Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop awareness of own body and space</li> <li>• Demonstrates basic movement skills</li> <li>• Enhance eye-hand coordination</li> <li>• Develop balance in movement</li> </ul>
Spiritual Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn about God through Bible songs</li> <li>• Appreciate the sounds that God has created and the voice He has given us to praise Him.</li> </ul>	Language Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance language skills by singing songs that relate to numbers, rhymes, shapes, colors, the days of the week/months of the year, the alphabet, etc.</li> <li>• Develop auditory discrimination and an awareness of rhythm</li> </ul>



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<b>Sand and Water Play Area</b>	
<b>Social/Emotional Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop cooperative play skills</li> <li>• Develops and demonstrates self-regulation and independence</li> <li>• Follows rules and routines</li> </ul>	<b>Physical Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an awareness of texture such as rough/smooth, hard/soft, wet/dry</li> <li>• Develop sense of space.</li> <li>• Enhance eye-hand coordination skill</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and awareness of volume and conservation</li> <li>• Develop spatial relationships such as in/out, up/down</li> <li>• Develop process skills by using the senses to observe, analyze, describe and make predictions</li> <li>• Uses problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Uses imagination to pretend</li> </ul>	<b>Language Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop vocabulary associated with texture and measurement</li> <li>• Asks and answers questions</li> <li>• Participates in conversation</li> <li>• Uses language to express feelings</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Godly character traits by sharing materials, helping others, and taking turns</li> </ul>	
<b>Science/Discovery Area</b>	
<b>Social/Emotional Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop respect for living things</li> <li>• Follow rules and routines</li> <li>• Develop cooperative play skills</li> </ul>	<b>Physical Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use senses to observe the natural world</li> <li>• Enhance eye-hand coordination</li> <li>• Develop fine motor skills</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop process skills by using the senses to observe, analyze, describe and make predictions about the natural world</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of basic needs of living things (plants, animals, and people)</li> </ul>	<b>Language Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and expand vocabulary associated with scientific discovery</li> <li>• Use language to express thought</li> <li>• Asks and answers questions</li> <li>• Participates in conversation</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual Development:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn to appreciate God's creation and the job God has given us to care for His creation</li> </ul>	



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### **Language and Literacy in the *Child Development Curriculum***

When a child is born, he has the wiring in his brain to learn language. He begins to learn spoken language by associating sounds with meaningful experiences. He associates the sound of his mother's voice with her face. He associates a loving smile with the soft sounds of a caregiver's voice. At about one year of age, a child has acquired a much of the knowledge about his native language. He understands much more that he can express. He begins to imitate sounds by listening to people engage in everyday conversations with others or when people engage in conversation with him. In time, children learn that words are made up of separate sounds and sentences are made up of words. This is called phonological awareness, the ability to hear and work with sounds, the first of five major building blocks in learning to read and write language. The remaining four are (1) Learn about print and books; (2) Learn about the sounds of spoken language (phonological awareness); (3) Learn about letters of the alphabet (alphabet knowledge); and (4) Listen to books being read aloud (Armbruster, et al, p. 6).

A child begins to attain an understanding of written language while he/she is being read to by others or by watching others read books, newspapers, or magazines for themselves. Before children learn to read they must first be able to recognize and name letters of the alphabet to make the connection between the letters and the sounds of spoken language. When parents and caregivers read to young children, children begin to make the connection between words that are spoken and words that are seen in print. Children also learn that books are held right side up, pages are turned from left to right, and lines are read from top to bottom and left to right. Reading stories aloud to children also expands their vocabulary and introduces them to the world in which they live. Singing the alphabet song is one way to familiarize young children with the letters of the alphabet. "Children who go to kindergarten already knowing the names and shapes of the letters and who know how to write them, have an easier time learning to read" (Armbruster, et al, p. 8).

### **Mathematical Thinking in the *Child Development Curriculum***

Other readiness skills that are essential to a child's intellectual growth include learning about colors, shapes, and size; understanding same and different (classification), patterning, and sequencing; and acquiring a solid understanding of numbers. Recognizing colors is an important skill. Adults often talk to children about colors. Even though the children hear the names of many colors, they may not know which color goes with which name. Relating the color word to the color itself is important because people use colors for various reasons. Colors are used to describe things, to give information about safety such as the colors on a traffic light or on a stop sign, to solve problems, e.g., the color of the sky can tell us about the weather. A blue sky means a clear day. A gray sky could mean rain. A black sky could mean that a thunderstorm is coming. Colors change with the seasons. Certain colors are associated with different holidays and special events such as Independence Day and Valentine's Day. Colors are all around us. Learning about them is an essential part of a child's development. Learning about shapes is also essential for learning.

Babies are born seeing grey shapes. They can see them and touch them, but they do not know the name of each shape. Engaging in conversation about shapes with young children as they



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manipulate them is the best way to help children make the connection between the shape and its name. Shapes help to build reading, writing and math skills because letters and numbers are shapes. Not only do children need to learn about shapes, they also need to learn about size.

Children are exposed to size every day. They see themselves as being small and their parents or caregivers as being big. Children learn about size through play by trying to place larger objects into smaller spaces. Some toys are designed to teach size. Children learn about size through their communication and play with peers. They learn to make choices when they choose an item by size. Children usually think of size in terms of opposites, the first being large/small followed by tall/short, long/short, wide/narrow, thick/thin, and deep/shallow. Parents and caregivers should take every opportunity to talk about size. Talking about size in a variety of ways not only reinforces the child's concept of size but also helps the child make the connection between the concept of size and the meaning of the words used to describe size. Learning about same and different (classification), patterns, and sequencing are also necessary.

Learning about classification helps children develop organizational skills. Young children need to learn about patterns because patterns are in numbers, letters, words, colors and rhymes. Sequencing helps children solve problems and follow directions. The letters of the alphabet always follow the same sequence, as do the numbers on a counting line or in oral counting. Children can gain a better understanding of time by organizing events or daily routines through sequencing. Finally, children need to develop a rich understanding of numbers.

Children learn the central foundations of number and quantity through informal experiences. Children as young as one and two years of age develop primitive ideas about quantity. Young children use counting as a means of developing their understanding of quantity. Children first learn to say numbers in order (rote counting) before they can count objects. The counting process should begin gradually, for example, saying "1, 2" as a parent or caregiver climbs stairs with a toddler. Number names can be added as the child begins to understand them. Reciting finger plays that include counting or nursery rhymes such, as "One, two, buckle my shoe" are also helpful. In addition to naming numbers in order by ones, children can begin naming numbers by groups, (2's, 5's, and 10's). Children who acquire an understanding of numbers before starting school tend to develop a more positive attitude toward mathematics. The basic foundations of math can and should be taught at an early age. They are as follows:

- Counting by rote (saying the names of numbers in order)
- Counting things one to one
- Reading and writing numbers
- Understanding numeral and quantity relationships

Many children enter school lacking skills necessary to help them achieve. We as adults have a tendency to think that children should automatically know the basic readiness skills because the skills come natural to us. However, these skills must be learned before a child starts school and the best time to begin is during the early years. This is the basis for the content of the curriculum and should be the goal of all parents and caregivers. The goal is for all children to start school ready to learn.



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