



I am swamped with folders full of new standards, benchmarks, directives, and goals for early childhood educators. I try to keep all that urgent information in my somewhat cluttered mind as I set up the multipurpose room for eight sessions of music and movement experiences with our young children of different ages. So much to think about and plan for, with cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development components! I'm thinking about how to support the children's developing skills—language, listening, cooperative learning, spatial awareness, and more.

The **Boo-Boo** Curriculum

Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld

My plan for the 3- and 4-year-olds today honors a classic theme for early learners—body parts. A favorite subject and a core focus!

Before I can welcome the group, the children gather around me as Andrew holds out a finger wrapped in a large, colorful Band-Aid.

“Mimi, I have a boo-boo,” he says as he thrusts his wounded finger toward me. I kiss it and try to begin our session.

In the next 15 minutes, every single child shows me and tells me about past, present, and future boo-boos. I kiss them all.

On this day, graduate students from a nearby university are observing the session. Taking notes on clipboards thick with comments, they watch open-mouthed as the discussion about boo-boos continues—it's unstoppable! They can't help but note that the children are wonderful listeners. They are interested in all the sharing of boo-boo experiences. The preschoolers cooperatively take turns and expand on Andrew's story about his boo-boo, offering more complex narratives:

“Once my grandma had a boo-boo on her knee, and she went to the hospital.”

“I had a boo-boo right here on my elbow, but it went away.”

“My dog had a boo-boo on his paw, and when he walked he kind of hopped, but it's okay now.”

“When I was a baby, my cousin said I had a boo-boo on my tummy. I had a tummy ache but the doctor made it go away.”



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“Whenever I get a boo-boo, my dad kisses it.”

“We have to be careful not to bump into people because they can get boo-boos.”

“I had three boo-boos once. A boo-boo on my nose, a boo-boo on my arm, and a boo-boo on my leg. I got the three boo-boos from falling off my bike even though it had training wheels.”

“If you have a bad boo-boo, your mom calls the doctor.”

“Once my brother had a boo-boo in his mouth, but it was his new tooth.”

“The tooth fairy can fix boo-boos.”

The children go on and on. They demonstrate their skills—oral language, vocabulary use and comprehension, listening skills, spatial awareness, cooperation, empathy, numerical competency, and knowledge of the locations of body parts. Oh my, when I check my folder, heavy with early learning objectives, I grab my pen and check off most of the items! Emergent curriculum, whole language, and developmentally appropriate practices are demonstrated as we explore this fascinating topic.

You don’t need to wait until an Andrew offers you his bandaged finger to start an exciting learning experience that meets every applicable early curriculum standard. Just tape a small Band-Aid on your own hand or on a beloved classroom puppet to begin this conversation. That alone will guarantee a delightful session of rich conversation and the delight of sharing a familiar subject beloved by young children: boo-boos. **TYC**

Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld has worked at the Leo Yassenoff Columbus Jewish Community Center Early Childhood Program since 1970, where she participates in many boo-boo conversations. She is the only educator who visits her former preschool children in nursing homes! Mimi’s latest book is *Still Teaching in The Key of Life*, copublished by NAEYC and Redleaf Press.

