

# 6 Lesson Plan Templates

to Suit all Styles and Approaches




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There are so many ways to make effective lesson plans for pre-school classes. The most important thing to keep in mind is that there is no right or wrong; you need to implement the type of lesson plan that works best for you, for your school community and for your parents and children.

Every group of parents will be different, but in my experience most like to see photos of what their children are experiencing in your preschool.

Demographics are important, particularly the socioeconomic status of the families and the school community. For example, while some parents will engage in sophisticated forms of communication, such as through intranets set up by the school, others have difficulty reading and writing English – so it's essential to cater your approach appropriately.

The type of lesson plan expected will also vary depending on whether your school is private, public or religious.



## DAILY SCHEDULE

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It is important for the daily schedule to indicate an overview of what is happening in each time period. It is extremely flexible and if something takes longer or a new interest materializes, then it is easy to vary from the daily routine.

It is absolutely critical to allow time for independent play. This can then be broken down further into experiences; whether inside, outside or both. It's a great idea to extend inside independent play to the outside area so that children have more options. On that note – it's not bad weather, it's a bad choice of clothing! Ask parents to bring in rain boots and a waterproof coat that can be kept at preschool, so that the children can experience outside play even when it isn't sunny.

It is essential to incorporate transition times between discrete elements of the routine into your lesson plan. We're always aiming for a smooth transition – avoiding the children sitting and waiting or lining up for extended periods of time – as it is intended to be a constant learning experience.



## THEME-BASED LESSON PLAN

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Creating preschool lesson plans by themes is one of many ways we can shape a preschool learning environment.

If you are following thematic lesson plans, then the following activities need to be addressed:

- fine motor
- gross motor / outdoors
- problem solving
- music
- group time / language / story
- social and emotional
- sensory
- creative
- self help

The idea behind a thematic lesson plan is that all aspects of the children's holistic early childhood education will be approached through the lens of one theme. A theme might last from a few weeks up to an entire quarter.




Some ideas for themes are included below:

- Animals
- Countries
- Bears
- The Body
- Christmas
- Clocks
- Clowns and Circus
- Community
- Dinosaurs
- Family
- Health
- Recycling and Sustainability
- Safety
- Sea
- Transportation
- Self
- Home
- Colors
- Senses
- Seasons
- Shapes
- Concepts: such as, up/down, full/empty, in/out, high/low, tall/short, over/under
- Shops
- Plants
- Nursery Rhymes

This is just a short list to give you an idea of the possibilities, but the variety of topics you might choose is truly endless.

When you select a theme, consider the aims for the period and how these aims will be achieved. When you are doing thematic lesson planning, you would usually relate all subject areas to this theme.



As with any style of lesson planning, make sure you consider the resources available; for example: excursions, community, songs, stories or people. What concepts are to be developed? What senses? What are the language experiences? How can your families get involved?

Once you have selected a theme, it can be broken down into weekly or daily lesson plans, as usual, retaining flexibility to meet individual needs and allowing for spontaneous experiences.

# DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS LESSON PLAN

## (AND TEAM TEACHING LESSON PLAN).


A developmental stages preschool lesson plan is not as rigid as the timeframes that are set out in the weekly lesson plan described above. There is more flexibility built in to cater for the needs of individual children.

A developmental areas preschool lesson plan addresses:

- Fine Motor
- Gross Motor / Outdoors
- Problem Solving
- Music
- Group Time: Language and Story
- Social / Emotional Development
- Sensory Development
- Creative Development
- Self Help

This type of lesson planning can be more team-based as it is conducive to an open and collaborative planning approach. The plan is usually kept on display for viewing in the preschool. I have also included a team teaching lesson plan template in this pack, which you can use or adapt to your own needs.





A developmental area lesson plan is ordinarily undertaken on a weekly basis. Accordingly, it can take the evolution of interests from the preceding day or week into account. There is also the flexibility to continue the experience the following day or week – the unexpected is expected in preschool!

I do find that it can be a bit trickier with smaller children, however, as there are more procedures that need to happen; for example, nappy changing or sleep time. It can also depend heavily on your preschool hours.

I see the key attribute of this type of lesson planning as ensuring that you are addressing all development aspects and skills of every child in your care.



## LEARNING CENTERS PLAN

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A learning centers lesson plan is incorporated into areas set out in your room.


The learning centers that I like to use are:

- Creative Arts
- Socio-Dramatic
- Math and Science
- Manipulative Learning
- Library, Writing, Drawing
- Construction
- Computer and Sound
- Children's Interests

Each center has a choice of 4-5 activities that may change or be added to daily, weekly or fortnightly according to the children's interests.

This type of lesson planning encourages independent choices by the children.

For each learning center I would provide resources for a small group of children to play with. The idea is that once they have



finished playing, they pack up and place the resources back on the shelf. This gives them the responsibility of choosing, playing and packing away. They learn to leave the area clean and show respect for the next child that will be involved in this learning center.

A child may, especially at the beginning of the year, be more confident to stay in the one area for a long period of time. As the child feels secure within that particular learning center you can gradually change it to a social, problem solving or creative area. Once you have a child's trust and they feel secure, you can then encourage them to explore other learning centers.

A learning centers lesson plan is usually complemented by separate language, music and movement activities (a group time lesson plan template is also included in this pack) and a separate outdoor plan.



## GROUP TIME LESSON PLAN

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This lesson plan is used to accompany the developmental, team teaching and learning center lesson plan templates.

This lesson plan is flexible and can be used for large or small groups. Alternatively, it can be used for the focus children you are specifically working with that week.

I use group time lesson plans for language-based activities and games, stories, music and movement activities.



## LEARNING JOURNEY LESSON PLAN


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This is my preferred style of lesson planning.

A learning journey preschool lesson plan still has a template to follow, but it is written without the constraints of themes or developmental areas. It is more interest-and-experimentally-based, rather than systematic. It is play-based, responsive to children's interests, prior knowledge, abilities, strengths and skills.

The essence of this style of lesson planning is to demonstrate the learning journey. As educators, we need to demonstrate the initial interest or experience that inspired the activity and how that evolved and the learning outcomes achieved along this journey.

For example, the culmination of one learning journey could be that you involve the local community by inviting a visit from a fire engine to the preschool. This might have evolved from a child playing outside making a siren sound. You might then turn a box into a fire engine, read some fire-related books, make a collage, use blocks to build fire engines, or a family member might be a firefighter who could visit. The



learning journey needs to be documented to demonstrate how the children are active participants in contributing and leading their own learning. This is one way to involve children, parents, and the local community in the preschool lesson plan.

Further evolution of the learning journey lesson plan style is through the use of mind maps, rather than the more restrictive template.



## TECHNOLOGY

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Today, some preschools have the opportunity to purchase iPads or other tablet devices. There are applications and programs available to assist with your planning. They often have ways for parents to log in and have a look at their child's day and be involved in their child's progress.

A slightly lower-tech solution that I have found is using a digital photo frame to display photos from the day so that when parents return in the afternoon they can immediately see what happened throughout the day. Children love looking at the photos too!