



It Takes a Community

A Community Guide to the
Sure Start Program





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FOREWORD

Sure Start is a unique, comprehensive program for preschool children and their families. The program is characterized by the philosophical belief that children do not grow and develop in a vacuum. To truly serve young children, there must be a united effort by schools, families, and the greater community. Education and citizenship prosper only when all band together in support of children.

This publication has been developed especially for the Sure Start community at an installation. It outlines your role in Sure Start and provides a context for the program in its entirety. Whether you are an active member of the Advisory Committee, a prospective provider of services, a part of the base command, or an interested member of the community, this booklet should provide you with the information you need.

Sure Start is a program of which we can all be proud. With the support of the community, all of our preschool children will be assured a "Sure Start" in life.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Defense (DoD) currently operates two educational systems for the children of military and civilian DoD families: Child Development Programs (CDP) and the Department of Defense Educational Activities (DoDEA). CDP offers childcare and before and after school care for children six weeks to 14 years of age, for a fee. DoDEA provides free, public education to all dependent children in grades K-12, plus selected pre-school-aged children, such as those with disabilities.

Together these two systems ably address the educational needs of DoD families living overseas. Prior to 1991, however, there existed a sizable population of preschoolers who were not being served by either system, due to reasons related to cost, geographic location, family factors, and a lack of available child care slots. Recognizing the need to better serve preschoolers, former Undersecretary for Defense, Ms. Millicent Woods, conceived the idea for Sure Start.

From the outset, Sure Start, like all DoD programs, was designed to provide high quality services. Sure Start was-and continues to be- unique, however, in its philosophical dedication to serving both children and families. The program is further distinguished by the fact that it offers comprehensive health and nutrition, social services, and parent involvement services, in addition to providing educational programming. As its name implies, Sure Start establishes a sound footing for school and later life.



Sure Start and the Head Start Model

In developing Sure Start, program designers looked to the highly acclaimed Head Start model for guidance. With three decades of successes to its credit, Head Start has been singled out as a “shining star among Federal Programs” (GAO, 1990).

Sure Start strives to incorporate the many features of Head Start that have been correlated with high quality. These include:

- A full-day (6 hour) program
- A four-pronged service delivery system (Education, Health, Social Services and Parent Involvement). Separate Component Plans outline the provided services and timelines for delivery.
- Medical, dental and developmental screenings are given to all enrolled children. Immediate follow-up assessment and services are provided, if problems are identified.
- Nutritious lunches and snacks are provided daily, taking into account children’s individual and cultural preferences, plus food-related health concerns.
- Families of all children are actively involved in the program through participation in classroom activities, parent education meetings and home visits.

- Developmentally appropriate practices are at the core of all programming. Careful planning is given to make the program environment, climate, materials, routines and activities appropriate to the children’s ages, individual needs, and cultures.

In an effort to make Sure Start fit into DoD culture and regulations, Sure Start has evolved into a program with a distinct personality. Specifically, Sure Start differs from Head Start in the following ways:

- Oversight for the program is in the hands of DoDEA, rather than the program itself. The Sure Start Advisory Committee reviews policy and recommends changes, but does not have governing power in the same sense that individual Head Start Policy Councils do. All Sure Start programs follow DoDEA regulations.
- Unlike Head Start which uses income as the defining criterion for eligibility, Sure Start regards family income as the most important—but not sole— factor used in considering enrollment.
- Whereas Head Start mandates that a minimum

of 10% of classroom slots be reserved for children with disabilities, Sure Start does not use disability status as an enrollment criterion. When a Sure Start child is discovered through screening to have special needs, Sure Start staff work with the DoDDS special education staff to determine the best possible placement for the child. The expectation is that Sure Start will have the same percentage of students with disabilities as in the general population.

- Unlike Head Start, parent involvement in Sure Start is mandatory, not voluntary. Parents are informed prior to registration that an involvement commitment (i.e., 60 hours for two-parent families, 40 hours for single-parent families or families with one parent on long-term deployment or sea duty) is a precondition for enrollment. Such participation is not viewed as “payment” for free child care, but as being integral to the program’s philosophy.
- Whereas Head Start requires that all programs use a developmentally appropriate preschool curriculum, but does not specify what that curriculum is to be, Sure Start uses The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood (Dodge & Colker, 1997) . All teaching staff receive annual training in this curriculum to ensure consistency in implementation.
- While Head Start leaves staff-child ratios to state and local licensing boards, Sure Start specifies a ratio of two adults to 18-20 students. Even though parent volunteers serve to lower the adult-to-child ratio, their presence does not affect official ratios.



The Sure Start Pilot Test

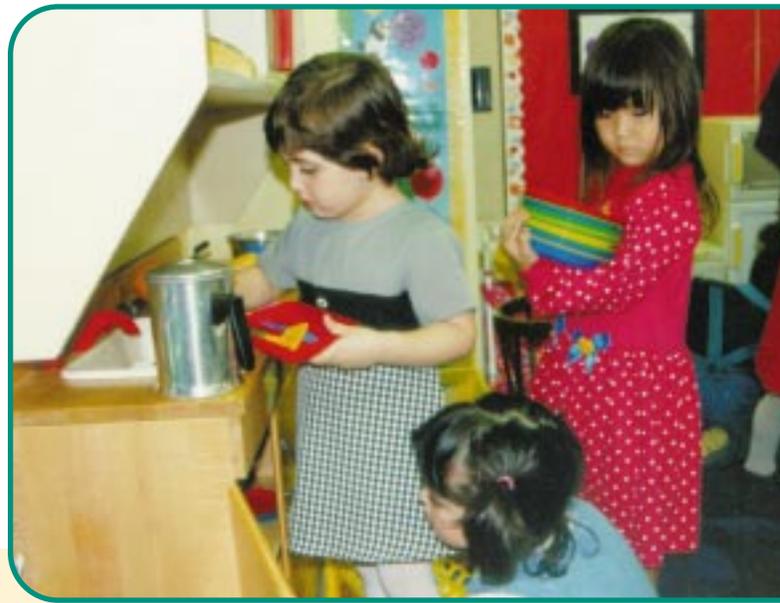
During Spring 1992, a pilot Sure Start program was implemented at RAF Lakenheath, England, to test the viability of the Sure Start model. The results of an extensive evaluation established that all of the pilot program's goals were successfully met, including the following two research objectives :

- Each student received high quality, developmentally appropriate programming that prepared him/her for kindergarten.
- Parents were fully involved in the education of their children.

As a result of the documented successes of the pilot program- plus the enthusiastic endorsement of participating families, staff, and administrators- 26 Sure Start programs were established in Europe and the Pacific in 1992-1993, at the request of the presiding Generals. In 1997-1998, the program was expanded to 14 additional sites. By the year 2000, there will be a total of 65 sites around the world.

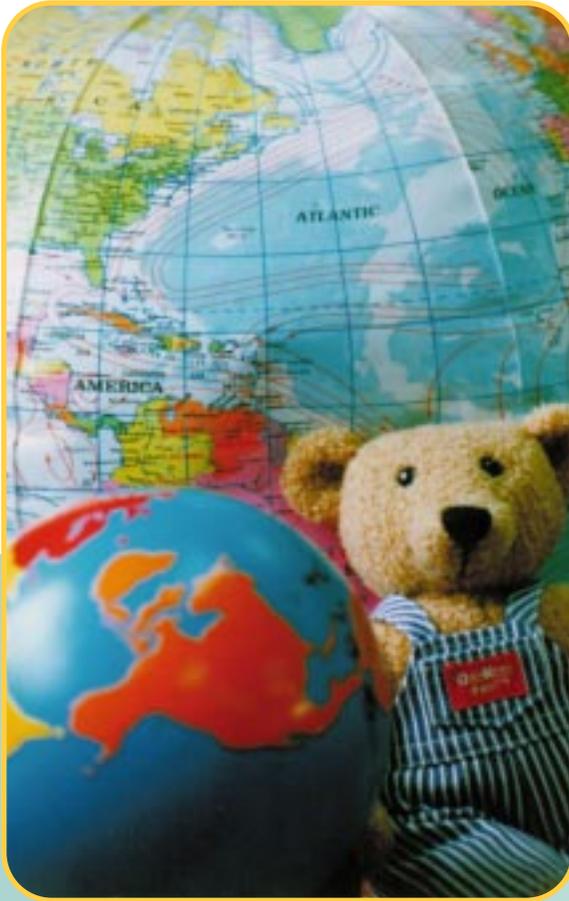
Sure Start Philosophy

Sure Start is committed to providing the highest quality of education for children and families living at military installations overseas who, due to demographic and geographic circumstances, would benefit from a comprehensive preschool program. Like the Head Start model on which it is based, Sure Start is dedicated to providing extended services in the areas of education, health, social services and family involvement .



Sure Start is founded on the principles of developmentally appropriate practice, as supported by research . Accordingly, the program is philosophically committed to the following tenets of child growth and development, that stem from the works of Piaget, Erikson, Vygotsky, Smilansky, Kolb, and Gardner, among others:

- Children learn best when there is a low adult to child ratio and a limited group size.
- Preschool-aged children learn best in an environment with clearly defined learning centers, where they are free to become engaged in activities of their own choosing.
- Children learn through play; the adult's role is to facilitate the child's problem-solving skills through questioning and support.
- Children have differing learning styles that need to be accommodated.
- Children are smart in different ways; their individual types of intelligences, including emotional intelligence, need to be supported.
- From the very earliest age, educators need to expose children to language, the arts, and physical education so that maximum advantage can be made of the "windows of opportunity" for learning , as revealed by brain research.



STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

It takes teamwork to administer the Sure Start program.

At the school level, there are three key players:

- The Elementary School Principal;
- The Sure Start Teacher; and,
- The Program Assistant.

In addition, the program is augmented by the use of volunteers, including parents. The Installation Community provides ongoing counsel and support through representation on an Advisory Committee, which also includes school administrative staff and parents. Here is what each member of the Sure Start team does.

The DoDDS Elementary School Principal

- Parent/family involvement in the program is crucial to children's success. This is accomplished through daily communications, required parent participation in the classroom, the use of home visits, and ongoing parent education.

Sure Start is targeted with providing children and their families with a fully integrated program of learning. The adopted curriculum, *The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood Education* (Dodge & Colker, 1997) sets forth a blueprint for this vision of developmentally appropriate practice. Through its comprehensive approach to meeting the whole needs of children and families, Sure Start is wedded to the belief that "risk is not destiny." With a Sure Start, children can develop the social competence needed for productive, lifelong learning.

As with all school programs, the Principal has oversight for the operation and implementation of the Sure Start program. Although programs will have a unique and individual flavor, Sure Start does have standardized procedures, which require that Principals do the following:

- In cooperation with DoDEA Headquarters, designate an appropriate site for the Sure Start program.
- Initiate recruitment action and hire the Sure Start Teacher and Program Assistant.
- Work with staff to ensure that the classroom and outside play areas are appropriately equipped.
- Act as a liaison between the Installation Commander and the Sure Start program to

ensure that parents have Command support for their volunteer participation in the classroom. .

- Oversee the Sure Start budget.
- Facilitate an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the school lunch provider to ensure that food service is implemented and that Sure Start is integrated into the school lunch program.
- Supervise and support Sure Start staff (Teacher and Program Assistant) and the program.

The Sure Start Teacher

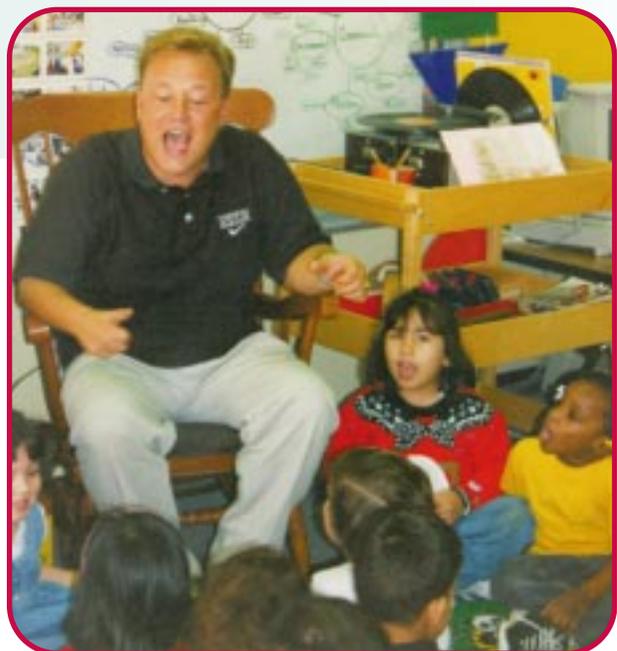
The Teacher's primary role is to provide individualized developmental care and instruction which will facilitate children's social, intellectual, physical and emotional growth in a manner appropriate to their ages and stages of development. The Teacher oversees a comprehensive educational program that addresses children's needs within the context of the family, assisting parents in increasing their knowledge, understanding, skills, and experience in child growth and development; and identifying and reinforcing experiences which occur in the home that will support what the child learns at school.

Among the Teacher's specific responsibilities are to:

- Oversee the day-to-day operations of the program, including the Education, Health, Social Services, and Parent Involvement Components.
- Draft the Education and Parent Involvement Component Plans at new programs; at continuing programs, update the annual Education Plan and Parent Involvement Component Plans in conjunction with the Sure Start Advisory Committee and other staff.
- Conduct parent orientation to the program and schedule home visits and school visits with families prior to program start-up.

- Participate in monthly fire and evacuation drills.
- Coordinate screenings with the medical and dental representatives on the Advisory Committee, DoDDS staff, and parents, ensuring that screenings are completed within 45-60 days of program start-up.
- Collaborate with the Child Development Programs (CDP) Training and Curriculum Specialist, Community Resources, and DoDDS teachers who deliver services to children with disabilities, as appropriate.
- Communicate regularly with families, including publication of a weekly or monthly newsletter.
- Arrange and conduct monthly parent meetings and triannual home visits

To be employed as a Sure Start Teacher, applicants must meet DoDDS certification standards for Teacher Pre-Kindergarten 0090 and the DoDDS position description for Sure Start. It is vital that the Sure Start Teacher promote a close working relationship between DoDDS, Child Development Programs, and the community to nurture the collaborative intent of this program and to ensure a quality environment for Sure Start children, families, and staff.



The Sure Start Program Assistant

The Sure Start Program Assistant is distinguished from other aides in the DoDDS system in that she or he is authorized to work even when children are not present in the classroom. Program Assistants work up to 39 hours per week so that they may plan together with the

Teacher, participate in Home Visits, and attend monthly parent education meetings.

Program Assistants are considered to be vital members of the Sure Start team.



Volunteers

An underlying premise of the Sure Start program is that children's lives are enriched when parents and other community members participate actively in classroom life. Parent participation in the classroom is a prerequisite for enrollment.

To ensure that the volunteers' time in the classroom is both effective and rewarding, all volunteers attend an Orientation training prior to spending time in the classroom. This training covers how children learn through play, appropriate expectations, what to do when children aren't interested or misbehave, and how to make the

experience a positive one. Volunteers are also required to attend Red Cross training when available through the military installation.

It should be noted that volunteers do not count toward the teacher/child ratio requirements. Because of this and to guard against any appearance of impropriety, volunteers are never left alone with children—even during nap time..

In addition to parent volunteers, volunteers from the community such as members of the Advisory Board, guest presenters from offices that deal with health or safety, librarians, or child development students from the high school or college are all welcome. Volunteers might wish to talk with students as a group or individually, read a book, or share a project. Volunteers greatly enhance Sure Start.

The Sure Start Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee serves as the "voice " of Sure Start. It is one of the prime organizational features which distinguishes Sure Start from other programs. The Advisory Committee is composed of the 'key players' concerned with Sure Start at each participating installation.

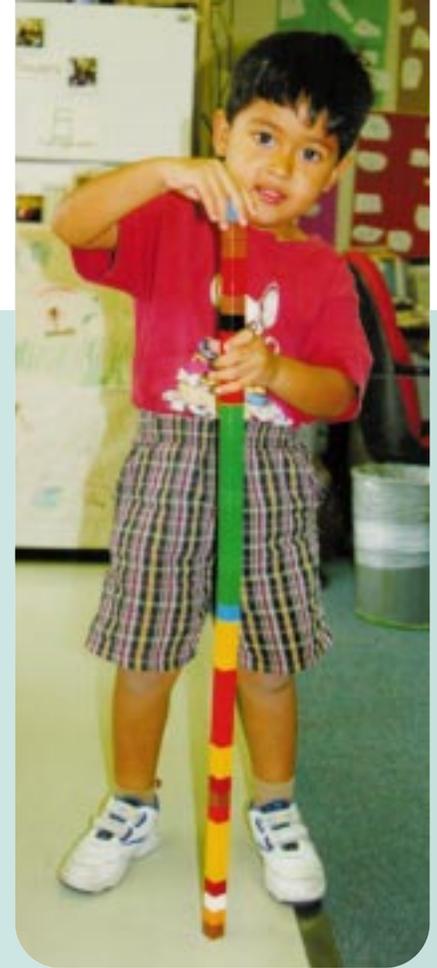
The Advisory Committee meets four times during the year (once each quarter). Each meeting has a specific agenda. The choice of Advisory Committee members and the overall size of the group are left to each site to determine, based on local needs and the availability of community representatives. It is vital, however, that persons representing DoDDS, the Service Child Development Programs, and each of the four component areas (education, health, social services and parent involvement) be included. (Note, however, that one person may

be dual or even triple “hatted” and represent more than one component area.) A typical Advisory Committee will be drawn from the following pool of expertise at the school and in the community:

- DoDDS Elementary School Principal (Note: he or she is a mandatory member of the Advisory Board)
- Sure Start Teacher, as soon as he/she is hired (Note: he or she is a mandatory member of the Advisory Board)
- Sure Start Program Assistant
- Installation Child Development Programs Director or representative
- Installation Pediatrician
- Nutritionist
- Base Parent Education Officer
- DoDDS preschool staff person responsible for providing services for young children with disabilities
- Base Social Worker
- Family Advocacy Program Officer
- Family Support Center Director or Family Service/Support Director
- Parent Advisory Committee member from CDP and/or elementary school
- Fire Department, Safety or Civil Engineering Representative(s), if needed.

During the first quarter of the school year, the Advisory Committee will meet as a unit to advertise the program, select children, and develop or revise Component Plans. Once school is in session, parents of participating families join the Advisory Committee. In order to ensure that parents have a majority voice in the program’s operations, the number of parent representatives elected to

the Advisory Committee equals the number of participants already on the committee- plus one. (That is, the Advisory Committee during the school year is composed of 49% DoDDS and community representatives and 51% parents). In those programs unable to obtain majority parent representation, the size of the Advisory Committee may be reduced or parent representation on the Committee becomes the number of interested parents available.)



FIRST QUARTER MEETING

(for DoDDS and Community Representatives)

Review of eligibility criteria and selection of children.

While each site is encouraged to prioritize and weight selection criteria to reflect local needs, Sure Start’s first responsibility is to the four year old children of families with income corresponding to the E-1 to E-4 or GS-1 to GS-4 range. These families have the least accessibility to resources for their children who will soon be entering Kindergarten. If 18 applicants to the program meet this criterion, these children will become the Sure Start classroom.



Beyond this initial criterion, there are a number of other criteria that can be used in selecting target children for Sure Start. They include:

- Child was of low birth weight (i.e., below 5 pounds, 8 ounces)
- Child has a parent whose primary language is not English
- Child has a parent who was a teenager when first child was born
- Child has a parent who has not graduated high school.
- Child is in family headed by single parent
- Child has three or more siblings close in age
- Child has a sibling with a severe disability
- Child has a parent on remote assignment for three or more months
- Child and/or family was referred for consideration by Family Advocacy, Chaplain's Office, or other family support agency.

It is important to note that having a disability is not a criterion for Sure Start eligibility. This is not to say, however, that Sure Start excludes children with disabilities—there are indeed students in Sure Start with dis-

abilities. However, disabled children in Sure Start are in the program because they have qualified on the criteria noted earlier. Their incidence in the Sure Start program should reflect the same incidence of special needs children in the population as a whole—10 to 14%

Children with disabilities may not be dual enrolled in both Sure Start and PSCD, although Sure Start children may receive special services within the classroom.

Children can only be placed in the Sure Start classroom by the Advisory Committee, with the Sure Start Teacher making the final decision on whether or not the needs of the child and the group will best be met by placement in Sure Start.

Initially, eighteen children are selected for the Sure Start program. Should a participating family PCS or withdraw for other reasons, the vacancy is filled by taking the next name on the Waiting List. Although eighteen children is the ideal size for the program, up to twenty children may be in attendance. These extra two slots are reserved for children who may be referred on an emergency basis by Family Advocacy or another community agency.

Development and/or Review of Component Plans.

The Advisory Committee is charged with overseeing the four Component Plans that outline how and when Sure Start services will be administered in each of the four component areas. The Sure Start Teacher is responsible for developing the Education Component Plan. The Medical Representative on the Advisory Committee, with input from other health professionals, the base nutritionist, and the Family Advocacy Program Officer has lead responsibility for the Health Component Plan. The Family Service/Support Center Director is charged with reviewing the Social Services Component Plan. The Teacher takes initial lead in overseeing the Parent

Involvement Component Plan. Input from parents is solicited once school is in session.

Other members of the Advisory Committee are encouraged and invited to share in the review process.

Formalization of cooperative arrangements with installation and community representatives.

These may include such agreements as establishing arrangements with the base hospital for screenings and arranging with the Officers' Spouse Club or Family Support Center for child care services during parent meetings. Copies of all agreements should be sent to the Base Commander and School Officer, as appropriate.

Specification of a timetable for electing parent members to the Sure Start Advisory Committee.

Programs have thirty days to bring parent representatives into the Advisory Committee.



Second and Third Quarter Meetings (for DoDDS and Community Representatives plus Parent Representatives)

These meetings are scheduled in response to needs; if more than one meeting a quarter is needed, additional meetings will be added on an ad hoc basis. The Advisory Committee meetings are convened to discuss pressing issues and make policy decisions. Among the types of questions that the Advisory Committee is likely to be asked to address are these:

- What to do about parents who do not fulfill their volunteer hour obligations? (Note: removing families from the program is not a viable option, since nonparticipating families tend to be those in greatest need of Sure Start's services.)
- How to handle food service problems—food is being delivered too early and/or cold?
- How to conduct study trips when there are no available buses with seat restraints?
- What can be done to facilitate cooperation with the base hospital in conducting health screenings?

Fourth Quarter Meeting (for DoDDS and Community Representatives)

During the final quarter of the year, the Advisory Committee meets one last time (without parents) to conclude business for the year and to set the program in operation for the next school year. Among the transition activities that are addressed at this time are these:

- General program records are moved to a designated, safe location, such as the Principal's office.
- An August date is set for the Advisory Committee to select students for the coming year. (Note that half the students for the coming year can be selected at this time and the remainder in August.)
- Letters of Reminder for the August meeting are given to the school secretary for mailing to Advisory Committee members in July.
- School summer staff are briefed on application procedures, deadlines and student selection dates.
- Program advertising is initiated.
- Appointments for medical screenings are set up for the Fall and the information sent out through the Advisory Committee's medical representative or through a formal letter to the appropriate personnel.

If parent vacancies to the Advisory Committee occur during the year, participating Sure Start families elect a replacement member to the Committee at the next monthly Parent Meeting. DoDDS/community replacement members are appointed by the Principal.

The structure and administration of Sure Start are designed to make the program run efficiently. Sure Start's structure is both unique and innovative. Once operational, it should require only 'fine tuning' and individualization during subsequent years.



SURE START'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO QUALITY

Sure Start serves preschool children and their families through four interrelated components.

The Education Component

The Education Component ensures that the program meets or exceeds known standards for quality programming. These standards cover five basic elements: (1) curriculum, (2) physical environment, (3) staff, (4) parent involvement, and (5) classroom climate.

Curriculum

The curriculum is probably the single most important component of any educational program. Its primary goal is to provide educators with a framework for helping students become capable learners—that is, children who are skilled developmentally and are motivated to learn. Sure Start has designated The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood (Dodge & Colker) as the curriculum of

choice. The underlying reason for selecting this curriculum is that it has a proven track record with Head Start programs and military Child Development Programs (CDP): over 18,000 Head Start grantees have successfully used The Creative Curriculum.; it is also the curriculum of choice at most military child care centers.

The curriculum focuses on providing children with learning experiences that promote their socio-emotional, physical and cognitive growth. Using Piaget and Vygotsky's theories of cognition, Erik Erikson's writings on socio-emotional development, and principles of physical development as its foundation, The Creative Curriculum presents staff with a structure for helping each child grow according to his or her own individual timetable

The context for learning in The Creative Curriculum is an environment that supports clearly defined learning activities. The curriculum features 10 activity areas through which instruction is introduced:

- Blocks
- Table Toys
- Music and Movement
- Art
- Books
- Sand and Water Play
- House Corner
- Outdoors
- Computers
- Cooking

In the curriculum, activities are discussed in terms of their importance to children's development, what learning objectives are appropriate for children, how the environment can be structured to promote these activities, strategies that can be used to enrich and extend learning, and ideas for coordinating with parents. The goal of the curriculum is to provide guidance for planning, without prescribing a series of set lessons.

Teachers are thus encouraged to build content around the experiences and interests of the children in their program so that learning takes place in a context that is meaningful to individual children.

The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood fosters creativity in both children and teaching staff. Being creative means thinking of new ideas, obtaining information by asking questions, learning through trial and error, and benefiting from mistakes. Children's creativity is supported through an environment that encourages them to try out ideas and risk making errors. Teachers' and Program Assistants' creativity is supported by a curriculum framework that encourages them to be innovative and responsive to children. By focusing on both teaching staff and children, The Creative Curriculum provides a framework for development in an educational setting in which young children can thrive.

To support the curriculum, there is a video that provides a visual representation of how the curriculum looks 'in action.'



Environment

Indoor and outdoor environments need to be set-up to facilitate and encourage learning. Being an environmentally based curriculum, The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood stipulates how the Sure Start room and outdoor area can be arranged to achieve this outcome.

The basic premise of room arrangement is that the classroom should be divided into distinct activity areas where children can play and become engaged in learning. Noisy areas should be separated from quiet ones and materials displayed on low, open shelving with written and picture labels indicating storage places.

In addition to an environment that is conducive to learning, Sure Start also requires that the environment be safe. This means that indoor and outdoor equipment be appropriate in size for children and free of small, detachable parts and sharp edges. Outdoor playground safety inspections are conducted using the same criteria as for other base preschool programs.



Staff

The staff in a quality program consists of adults who have received appropriate training, understand child development and early childhood education, and are interested in and knowledgeable about helping children learn. They are in good physical and mental health, have no history of child abuse, and are familiar with first aid procedures.

Sure Start staff receive annual DoDDS-sponsored training early in the program year. Subsequent to this, staff receive staff development, as appropriate.

A ratio of two adults to 18-20 children is imposed at all times to ensure that staff can provide the individual attention children need.

Parental Involvement

In a quality program, parents are recognized as the most important influence on their children's growth and development. Positive and productive relationships with families are established so that the program reflects their interests, values and acknowledges their concerns. Parents are kept informed about the program through daily contact, newsletters, meetings, conferences and printed announcements.

Parents are supported and respected in their role as their children's primary teachers. They are encouraged to be involved in program planning and implementation. Individual strengths are identified and used whenever possible. In addition, the program provides parents with training and resources to enhance their ability to perform as educators, decision makers and planners. The program also provides adequate supervision, training and support in carrying out these responsibilities.

Parent involvement is an integral part of the chosen curriculum. Specific strategies are outlined in the curriculum



The Health Component

The Health Component assures that children receive comprehensive health services, including medical, dental, mental health and nutritional services. Disabilities, if present, are identified and addressed. The basic premise of this component is that children need to be free of disease and hunger in order to learn.

Screenings

To ensure that each child receives a “Sure Start” in life, parental consent for medical, dental and developmental screenings is a precondition for enrollment. Screenings are normally completed within the first 45 days of the program, so that follow-up referrals, if appropriate, can begin. If, however, it is impossible to conclude screenings within this timeframe, a maximum of 60 days is allowed for completion of all screenings.

While implementation of the screenings is left to each site, the following plan is typical:

Appointments for the medical screenings are arranged during the first month of program operations, if possible. The height, weight, vision and hearing portions of the screenings can be completed by the school nurse. The speech and language screenings are conducted by the Communication Impaired Specialist. The remainder of the medical physical is scheduled through the Installation Pediatrician.

In total, medical data are collected on:

- height
- weight
- vision
- hearing
- blood pressure
- immunizations
- speech and language
- hemoglobin concentration (as a test for anemia)
- tuberculosis (if required by school or local regulations)
- lead concentration (as per local physician’s decision)

for involving parents in the children’s education through workshops, classroom participation and projects parents can do at home to support their children’s formal learning program. In addition, through incorporation of a home visitation component, Sure Start provides opportunities for parents to receive one-on-one instruction on helping their children grow and develop.

Climate

A quality program maintains an atmosphere of respect and appreciation for all those involved. Children are respected as individuals with feelings, interests and concerns. Interaction between children and staff is characterized by warmth, personal respect, individuality, positive support and responsiveness. Discipline is based on clearly stated rules, positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors, and efforts to redirect disruptive behavior.

Having a supportive environment also involves helping staff reach their potential through team building and staff development.

The Education Component ensures that Sure Start children grow in all areas- socio-emotionally, physically and, of course, cognitively. Teachers and Program Assistants implement the Education Component Plan as the blueprint for providing children with a learning program that meets each child’s individual and unique needs.

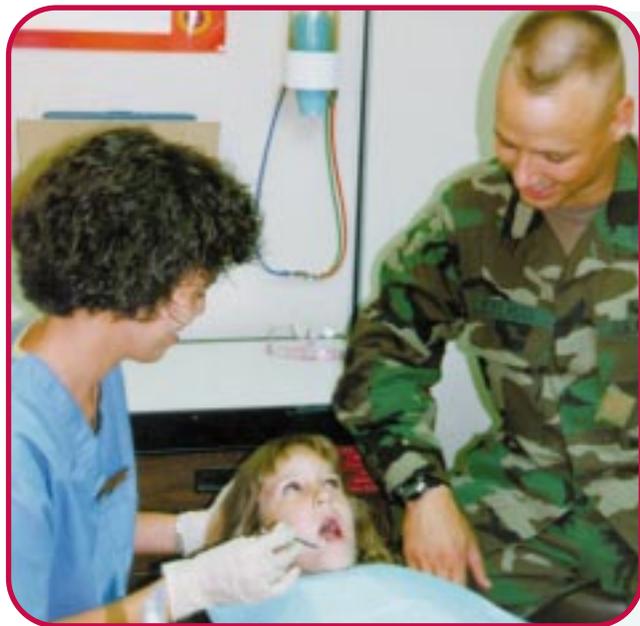
Health screening data are maintained on forms already in use at the installation or on one of the Sure Start program's design. A suggested form that may be used to collect physical information appears in the Appendix. Results of blood tests and follow-up are maintained at the hospital on the child's medical record.

- Dental screenings are performed on-site at the Sure Start program over a one or two day period after the program routine has been established. This allows children to become comfortable with the Sure Start program prior to the screening. In addition, all children can be reached at one time, rather than through a series of appointments. The dental screening is an oral diagnostic procedure, with emphasis on self-care.

Again, programs either make use of existing forms for screening or adapt the one which appears in the Appendix.

- The Sure Start developmental screenings cover the areas of language development, cognition, motor skills, self-help skills, and socio-emotional development. Screenings are only used to determine if a child should be monitored. In no instance are developmental screenings used for intelligence testing purposes. The Sure Start Teacher oversees this part of the screening.

If as a result of the screenings, further assessment is indicated, Sure Start staff follow established school procedures. The results of all screenings and follow-up treatment are kept strictly confidential.



Ongoing Health-related Measures

Children's health is monitored on a daily basis. This monitoring includes screening for illnesses, readmittance of sick children, emergency situations, and administration of medication. All of the above are completed following school guidelines.

In order to prevent the spread of germs, diligent cleaning procedures are followed using a bleach solution. Tables are cleaned with bleach solution after snacks and meals. Toys, equipment, and mats are cleaned bi-weekly.

Naps

In order to ensure that all Sure Start children receive sufficient rest, naptime is an integral part of the Sure Start schedule. Typically, naptime follows lunch. As children finish eating, they clear their plates, wash their hands, brush their teeth and get out their mats.

While children are encouraged to sleep, they are not forced to do so. Children can rest quietly on their mat with a book or stuffed animal. To promote sleep, staff dim the lights, play background music, make sure that mats are not touching, that talkers are separated, and that children are encouraged to rest.

Mental Health

A school counselor or military health professional should be available, at least on a consultation basis, to the program and the children. This person assists with:

- conducting preservice and inservice training for staff;
- working with parents;
- conducting screenings, evaluations and recommending interventions programs; and,
- identifying community programs that support families (such as Hearts Apart, parenting classes, family counseling, and so on).

As with all health services, the children's families are included in all discussions. Strict confidentiality of all records is maintained.

Nutrition

The nutrition-related objectives of the Health Component are to:

- Provide food which meets the child's daily nutritional needs, recognizing individual differences and cultural patterns, thereby promoting sound physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive growth and development;

- Provide an environment which will support and promote the use of snacks and mealtimes as opportunities for learning;
- Help staff, child, and family to understand the relationship of nutrition to health, factors which influence food practices, varieties of ways to provide for nutritional needs and to apply this knowledge in the development of sound food habits even after leaving the Sure Start program;
- Demonstrate the interrelationships of nutrition and other activities of the Sure Start program and their contribution to the overall child development goals;
- Involve all staff, parents and other community agencies as appropriate in meeting the child's nutritional needs so that the nutritional care provided by Sure Start complements and supplements that of the home and the community.

All meals and snacks meet the nutritional guidelines established by the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program. A hot lunch and one or two snacks are served during the time the children are in care, which provide one-third of the child's daily nutritional requirements.

Family-style lunch is a requirement of the Sure Start program. This means that children eat in their classroom—not in a school cafeteria. Everyone eats the same foods, serves themselves and enjoys pleasant conversation. During family-style dining, children are more likely to try new foods because they serve themselves. They can decide whether to put one pea or a spoonful on their plates.

Depending on the schedule and the time at which lunch is served, programs will either serve a morning and



afternoon snack or one in the afternoon only. Snacks may either be served family style, as described above, or incorporated into the cooking area so that children serve themselves when hungry.

The Health Component of Sure Start is vital to ensuring that children are primed for learning. Keeping children well and thriving is at the heart of Sure Start's philosophy.

The Social Services Component

The Social Services Component has as its mission helping improve the quality of life for the families of enrolled children by:

- Making parents aware of available community services and facilitating use of such services; and,
- Assisting participating families in their own efforts to improve the condition and quality of family life.

The Social Services representative on the Sure Start Advisory Committee is responsible for making initial contact with community agencies to ensure that they will be providing complementary services that are not redundant to those already being offered. Following this, the Sure Start Teacher acts as a liaison and:

- Furnishes families with information on available community services and how to use them;
- Follows established school guidelines for referring families for counseling, if indicated;
- Follows established school guidelines for referring families to agencies which provide crisis intervention and emergency assistance, if needed; and

- Serves as a facilitator for families in making appointments with community agencies.

In addition, Sure Start staff work with parents on meeting their needs throughout the duration of their children's enrollment. This means:

- (1) contacting parents or guardians whose children's attendance becomes irregular or when children are kept out of the program for three consecutive days, without any communication with the program, and
- (2) working with community service representatives to develop programs to meet unmet needs.

Finally, Sure Start staff serve as liaisons between families and the social services agencies. Social service providers have an open invitation to tour the Sure Start program and become involved in its operations.

The final role of the Social Services Component is to study and assess information. A master list of all identified needs and services offered is maintained so that there is a comprehensive perspective to the provision of services. Periodic review of these needs and services ensures that the Social Services Component is both dynamic and responsive to emerging family needs.



The Parent Involvement Component

As parents develop skills, make friends, and assume responsibility, children take pride in their parents' accomplishments and feel more confident themselves. This combination of increased confidence, proud role models, and high parental expectations help maintain in the future the advantages of a "sure start."

Sure Start is philosophically wedded to the concept of parent involvement. Parental involvement is sought in four main areas:

- as active participants in the classroom;
- in making recommendations regarding program policy and operation;
- as participants in parent education activities; and
- at home, working with staff, to support Sure Start experiences.

Parents as Classroom Participants

Because Sure Start views parent participation as an integral part of the program, parents must, as a term of enrollment, agree to volunteer their time in the classroom if they want their child to be a part of Sure Start. Command support for this activity is vital to its success.

Prior to volunteering in the classroom, all parents receive training on the following topics:

- An overview of the Sure Start program -its goals, philosophy, operating procedures, schedule, etc.
- The role of parents in Sure Start -as classroom participants, as recipients of services, as teach-



ers of their children, as participants advising the program.

- The Sure Start Parent Handbook, "A Sure Start for All Children"
- The video The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood
- An Introduction to The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood
- Guidance on how to work with children in the classroom, including:
 - suggested activities
 - tips on reading books with children
 - positive guidance techniques, such as what parents should and should not be doing when children misbehave
 - family-style dining
 - using open-ended questions to stimulate children's thinking.

In working with parents in the classroom, Sure Start staff make every attempt to match parents' interests with the activities they do with children. Some of the options include:

- Reading a story to children
- Leading a song
- Facilitating an art project
- Working with children on completing puzzles or building with blocks or manipulatives
- Introducing children to a recipe representative of a particular culture or background
- Working with children in preparing and setting up snacks and meals
- Being a part of family-style dining.

Sure Start is fully committed to the belief that parents can best contribute to their children's growth and development by actively participating in the in these ways. Parent volunteers are afforded the same respect as paid staff, as both contributions are vital to the success of Sure Start.

Parents as Policy Advisors

Sure Start guarantees parents a role in the education of their children through involvement on the Advisory Committee. Parents are in attendance at the second and third quarterly meetings of the Advisory Committee. The first and fourth quarterly meetings are held without parents, since these meetings deal with the selection of children and families.

Parents as Participants in Parent Education Activities

In serving children, Sure Start also serves parents. Sure Start meets parents' needs by offering parent education workshops, seminars, and lectures to participating families. Primary responsibility for this task is assumed by the Sure Start Teacher. In general, three types of activities are offered:

- Education, to add to parents' knowledge and skills
- Training activities, to increase understanding of their roles and functions in Sure Start
- Activities, to give parents an opportunity for pursuing interests.



Parents as the Prime Educators of their Children at Home

The philosophy underlying Sure Start's parent involvement component is that when the program joins forces with the parents, everyone benefits. This means that parents must be supported not just through program-related activities, but in the home as well. When parents are able to work with their children at home in the same ways that Sure Start staff work with children at school, gains are inevitable.

Several features are built into the program to assure this. First of all, the chosen curriculum makes this linkage directly. Each chapter in *The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood* includes information on what parents can do at home to support their children's learning. At a more formal level, Sure Start mandates that the Teacher and Program Assistant make two/three home visits per year to each Sure Start family.

The first home visit is made between the time children are selected for Sure Start and the program's start-up date. Sure Start's delayed start-up ensures that staff have ample time to complete these home visits. Staff make use of this visit to interview families about their expectations and goals for Sure Start. It is also a time to take photographs of the children with their families that can be displayed in the classroom.

The remaining home visits are more formal attempts to help parents work with their children to effectively promote learning. Each lasts approximately 60-90 minutes. In addition, one or two parent conferences (depending on the number of home visits made) complement the home visits



Either a home visit or parent conference is held in each quarter of the school year:

- First quarter: initial home visit
- Second quarter: parent conference to discuss screening and individualizing checklists
- Third quarter: second home visit or second parent conference
- Fourth quarter: final home visit

In order to make all of the home visits positive experiences, staff schedule them at times that are convenient for parents. The goal is to involve parents in their child's development -never to intimidate or make parents feel ill-at-ease. Partnership is always the theme underlying home visits.

The Parent Involvement Component-like all of the Sure Start Components-is designed to build quality into the structure of the program. This comprehensive approach to service delivery assures that the full range of child and family needs are identified and met.

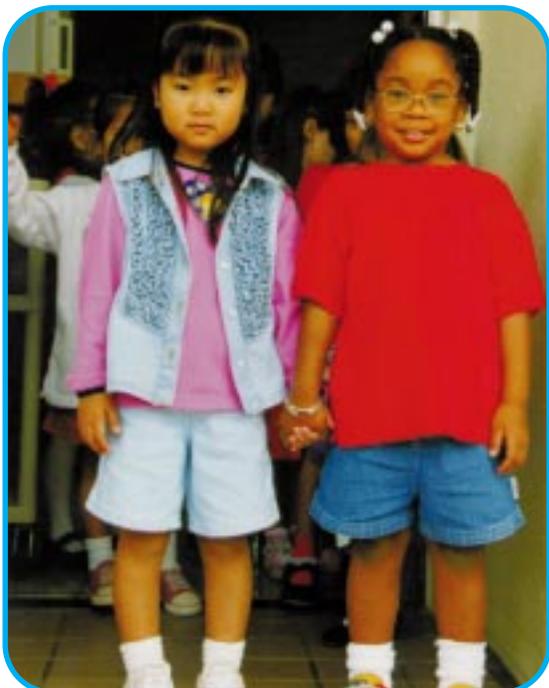
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment goes hand in hand with implementation. By identifying program strengths and weaknesses, Sure Start can be continually adjusted to better serve its target audience and maintain program quality.

Student Assessment

Sure Start uses developmentally appropriate assessment practices to measure student learning and progress. The aim of this type of assessment is to document how well the program is meeting the needs of children and to adjust instruction to meet each child's needs. To do this, staff are required to regularly observe children to see how they interact with materials, with other children, and adults. Through direct observations, staff thus determine if children are making developmental gains.

Individual assessments are completed on each child within 45 days of the program start-up, again at mid-year, and at the close of the school year. All completed copies of these assessments are maintained in the child's folder.



Portfolios

Portfolios are a collection of children's work which show the child's thinking. They record children's progress as they move through the curriculum. They are a living history of how children think and learn and develop social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills.

Portfolios contain actual work completed by children:

- Drawings, paintings, collages (including those inspired by stories or music)
- Writing and number-writing
- Books/stories dictated and illustrated by children
- Computer printouts of art, writing, or creative experiences
- Graphs of science-related experiments

They also house photos of children's:

- Artwork
- Cooking activities created on their own or as part of group projects
- Dramatic play activities
- Block building
- Indoor and outdoor play.

In selecting samples for portfolios, two filters are applied:

- (1) Does the sample illustrate the curriculum goals that have been set for the child? and,
- (2) Is the sample representative of the child's progress-not an example of the child's best work.

Program Evaluation

In addition to evaluating children's progress, Sure Start staff assess the effectiveness and quality of the program as a whole. This is done in a variety of ways, including:

- Administration of an observational tool for pinpointing program strengths and weaknesses, The Assessment Profile for Early Childhood: Preschool Version (Abbott-Shim & Sibley)
- Participation in the accreditation process sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- Completion of the DoDEA Annual Report
- Triennial evaluation of programs by DoDEA staff
- Surveys and reports compiled by DoDEA.

The results of these various evaluations will ensure that Sure Start delivers in practice the promise outlined in this document.

APPENDIX

Form for Medical Screening (page 23)

Form for Dental Screening (page 25)

Sure Start Child Health Screening

Date _____ Anticipated Enrollment Date _____
 Child's Name _____ Child's Date of Birth _____
 Child's Sponsor's Name _____ Spouse's Name _____
 Sponsor's Address _____ Spouse's Address _____

 Sponsor's Home Phone _____ Spouse's Home Phone _____
 Sponsor's Duty Phone _____ Spouse's Duty Phone _____
 Hospital/Clinic _____ Phone _____
 Doctor/Physician _____ Phone _____
 Dental/Clinic _____ Phone _____

Completed by School

Completed by School

	Speech/Language	Vision	Hearing	Develop/Screening
Date				
Type				
Pass/Fail				
Date				
Type				
Pass/Fail				

Immunization Record

	Date Received	Date Received	Date Received
DPT 2 (MOS)		TBT 12 (MOS)	DPT 4-6 (YRS)
OPV 2 (MOS)		OPV 15 (MOS)	OPV 4-6 (YRS)
DPT 4 (MOS)		DPT 15 (MOS)	MEAS 5-6 (YRS)
OPV 4 (MOS)		MMR 15 (MOS)	HEP (B) 1-4 (YRS)
DPT 6 (MOS)			OTHER
HIB 2,4,6 (MOS)			

Physical Exam (must be completed within 45 days of enrollment)

Date of Exam		Clinic	Phone
Height		Weight	

Medical Screenings

	TB	Lead	HGB/HCT	BP
Date				
Result				
Date				
Result				

Problem List

Date	Problem	(A) Active	(I) Interactive	(F) Follow-up Needed	(A-I-F)

Current medical treatment and prescribed medication: _____ Follow-up Needed=(X)

** TB and Lead screening is at the discretion of the physician

Dental Form

Date Dental Exam	X-Ray	Prophy	Flouride	Water (FW)	Tablet(FT)	Rinse (FR)

Dental Treatment

Date Dental Work	Problem	(C) Completed	(I) Incomplete	(F) Follow-up Needed	C-I-F

Diagnostic Code

Horizontal stripes indicate
Stainless Steel Crown
covering tooth entirely.



Solid Area indicates
filling present.



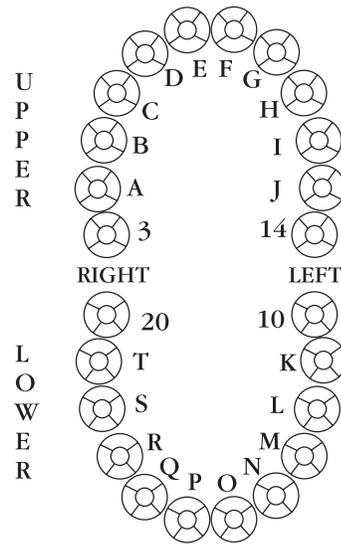
Zebra Stripes indicates
decay present.



Vertical Line indicates
to be extracted.



"X" indicates a missing tooth.



Medical and Dental Procedures

The above named child was examined by me and found to be in satisfactory health for participation in Sure Start. Examination results indicate that the child is apparently free from communicable disease and able to participate in all activities except as noted below.

Limitations: _____

Signature of Physician: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Dentist: _____ Date: _____

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