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Commentary Paper

I chose community helpers to create a curriculum. The activities I created were influenced by some children I work with now. The children I work with now are too young to understand the concept of community helpers. However, the activities I created would be interesting for them. I obviously enhanced the activities because this curriculum is based on pre-K learners. I thought of some of the things I do now with them and I added more complex materials and activities. I really feel it's important to teach children things that they see often and experience in their everyday life. I believe that teaching children about communities when they are young encourages them to have gratitude and want to help others. It allows them to have a sense of self and being a part of a community. I also think that community helpers are a great way to engage children with each other. there's a lot of things you can do and pretend to play and share different experiences that they have been through in their own life.

Teaching children about community helpers shows children the responsibility of how people contribute to a group. It shows children that we are all connected and included in each other's life in some way. It allows children to explore their own interests and strings that they would like to do in the world. This is a learning experience that could have children collaborate with each other and experience real world problem-solving.

In the curriculum I created, I made sure that it was developmentally and culturally appropriate for a group of diverse pre-K learners. In the books that I chose, there is

representation of diverse helpers and even children. There are community helpers that are stereotypically supposed to be men, but I chose to represent women filling those same roles. There are different races and genders throughout all the books in my curriculum. According to *DAP: Planning and Implementing an Engaging Curriculum to Achieve Meaningful Goals*, it states that, “The curriculum should provide mirrors so that children see themselves, their families, and their communities reflected in the learning environment, materials, and activities. The curriculum should also provide windows on the world so that children learn about peoples, places, arts, sciences, and so on that they would otherwise not encounter” (P. 1). It is important for children to see themselves portrayed in meaningful and positive roles. This allows them to feel connected and valued in a classroom and in the world. When it comes to learners that come from different cultural backgrounds, and different languages. I will have questions ready to ask them to share their own personal experiences and their home languages so that they can share and educate other students as well. My curriculum has many different learning styles included in the topics. The activities are hands-on and open ended, allowing children to be creative and put their own knowledge into it. All of my activities include visual cue cards as well for children who have a hard time understanding language. This curriculum requires a lot of props as well for children to engage or observe other children playing. Throughout my curriculum, I will invite families if they would like to come and share how they help their community. It’s important to have family input and participation to teach the children about different cultures, understandings, and different experiences in the world. I understand that different families may view certain community helpers differently based on their family background or what their family experienced. I will make sure to emphasize the concept of helpers rather than just promoting the

authority figures we are learning about. This curriculum is made to emphasize teamwork and helping each other grow.

There are multiple learning styles for children in an early childhood classroom. I made sure to include all of those learning styles in each of my activities. All of these activities are based on play, which is important for a child's learning. According to *The Power of Playful Learning in the Early Childhood Setting*, "By harnessing the children's interests at different ages and engaging them in playful learning activities, educators can help children learn while having fun" (Zosh 12). Playing is important in a classroom, it is my job to observe and learn the children to know what they are most interested in and apply that in the curriculum every week. There are visual cues available for children who are emergent language learners or children who benefit more from visual learning. Those children can also learn from story books and the props that will be used during this curriculum. For children who engage more with auditory, there will be opportunities for a group, discussions and songs teaching them about these community helpers. Children who enjoy hands-on activities have the opportunity for role-playing and dressing up. There will be opportunities to share and act out different scenarios based on their community helper interest for the kinesthetic learners. There will be sensory bins and a lot of opportunity for tactile learners to explore more into the helper roles. Overall, there will be different styles of play for each individual learner and what they are more interested in.

I will also be there to scaffold and support new children who need it. I will model language and ask some questions to keep them thinking and curious. As a future teacher, I will make sure to engage the children to my best ability. I will be observing them and listening to the conversations they have as they play and with each other to assess them and see if they retained the information

that they have learned. It will also be exciting to hear and watch them grow into their own community helper.