



WePlaySmart by Hatch (WPS) is a cooperative-based learning environment for preschool children with activities specifically designed for children to ensure they gain the social-emotional and cognitive skills needed to be successful in an early childhood setting and when they enter formal schooling. The skills are housed within themes that are most meaningful to children and tie in best with social-emotional development: Our Homes and School, Our Neighborhood and Community, Our World, and Beyond Our World. Children will be greeted and accompanied by friendly fun characters. They are presented with visual, audio, and tactile scenarios and opportunities to learn about and make decisions about socially, age-appropriate social and emotional behaviors.

WPS has a built-in automated progress monitoring system that records children’s interactions and then offers a set of assessment items for teachers to determine social-emotional competency throughout the school year—all of which are then made available in fully formatted reports. To round out, a set of additional activities called “Beyond the Table” is available for the teacher to expand and extend to other areas and situations in the classroom. As always with Hatch products, WPS comes with lifetime training and technical assistance.

Alignment to Standards and Outcomes

WePlaySmart by Hatch aligns with the new Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (Dec.2010), the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and the California Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 1.

Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (Dec.2010).

WPS supports in particular the Social-Emotional Domain and the Approaches to Learning Domain.

Within the Head Start Framework under Social Relationships, WPS offers activities that help children acquire the following skills:

- Cooperates with others.
- Develops friendships with peers.
- Uses socially appropriate behavior with peers and adults, such as helping, sharing, and taking turns.
- Resolves conflict with peers alone and/or with adult intervention as appropriate.
- Recognizes and labels others’ emotions.
- Expresses empathy and sympathy to peers.
- Recognizes how actions affect others and accepts consequences of one’s actions.

In Self-Concept and Self-Efficacy, the activities are designed to facilitate children in the following skills:

- Identifies personal characteristics, preferences, thoughts, and feelings.
- Demonstrates age-appropriate independence in a range of activities, routines, and tasks.
- Shows confidence in a range of abilities and in the capacity to accomplish tasks and take on new tasks.
- Demonstrates age-appropriate independence in decision making regarding activities and materials.

In the area of Self-Regulation, WePlaySmart by Hatch will support children in the following skills:

- Recognizes and labels emotions.
- Handles impulses and behavior with minimal direction from adults.
- Follows simple rules, routines, and directions.
- Shifts attention between tasks and moves through transitions with minimal direction from adults.

Emotional and Behavioral Health are likewise very well represented to help children gain the following skills:

- Expresses a range of emotions appropriately, such as excitement, happiness, sadness, and fear.
- Refrains from disruptive, aggressive, angry, or defiant behaviors.
- Adapts to new environments with appropriate emotions and behaviors.

Attention to Executive Function skills is also present in WPS and aligns especially well under Approaches to Learning. The Framework states that children's approaches to learning contribute to their success in school and influence their development and learning in all other domains. Children's ability to stay focused, interested, and engaged in activities supports a range of positive outcomes, including cognitive, language, and social and emotional development. It allows children to acquire new knowledge, learn new skills, and set and achieve goals for themselves.

WPS design and activities support skill development in the following areas:

Under Initiative and Curiosity:

- Demonstrates flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness in approaching tasks and activities.
- Demonstrates eagerness to learn about and discuss a range of topics, ideas, and tasks.
- Asks questions and seeks new information.

Within Persistence and Attentiveness:

- Maintains interest in a project or activity until completed.
- Sets goals and develops and follows through on plans.
- Resists distractions, maintains attention, and continues the task at hand through frustration or challenges.

For supporting Cooperation:

- Plans, initiates, and completes learning activities with peers.
- Joins in cooperative play with others and invites others to play.
- Models or teaches peers.
- Helps, shares, and cooperates in a group.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

The CLASS measures three broad domains of classroom quality (but has no "academic" areas such as literacy or mathematics):

1. Emotional Support around positive relationships among teachers and children;

2. Classroom Organization for well-managed classrooms that provide children with frequent, engaging learning activities; and
3. Instructional Support for interactions that teach children to think, provide ongoing feedback, and facilitate language development.

WePlaySmart by Hatch can support the quality of the classroom in each of the domains.

Emotional Support

- Teacher Sensitivity: Encompasses the teacher's awareness of and responsivity to students' academic and emotional needs; high levels of sensitivity facilitates students' ability to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement. *At the heart of WPS, to ensure emotional needs are met, the activities are all about the social and emotional development of children. We use positive feedback to help children feel accepted and safe while they are using WPS. To ensure meeting academic needs, literacy, math, social studies, and science are woven into the activities.*
- Regard for Student Perspectives: Captures the degree to which the teacher's interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivation, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy. *WPS was designed by early childhood educators who understand the range of interests in young children and the ways in which young children think and interact with their world. Children experience success in the activities because they are in the zone of proximal development (just where the child is ready to go with support), and the child experiences a great deal independence through both responsibility for interacting with the activities and autonomy to be able to "do it themselves".*

Instructional Support

- Concept Development: Measures the use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher's focus on understanding rather than rote instruction. *The activities present children with extensive opportunities to learn and apply problem solving skills. By using the Progress Monitoring tool teachers can know throughout the school year that understanding is occurring for children.*
- Quality of Feedback: Assesses the degree to which feedback is provided that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation. *We use only appropriate and positive feedback in WPS to help children stay engaged and having a good experience.*
- Language Modeling: Captures the quality and amount of the use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques. *WPS uses language as the foundation for skill learning and is presented and modeled to the children in the most appropriate manner-through a licensed speech and language specialist.*

Classroom Management

- Behavior Management: Encompasses the ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect behavior. *WPS activities are designed for this purpose to move children through activities in the best manner for them as well as including a tutorial to understand how to do an activity. This sets up the boundaries and expectations and because it matches their current and upcoming skill level they do not experience frustration, therefore preventing off-task behavior.*

- **Productivity:** Considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities. *As WPS was designed to be successfully child-directed right from the start, there is virtually no loss of instructional time for the child. The Progress Monitoring tools also are an extremely valuable way to measure that instructional time is resulting in skill gains.*
- **Instructional Learning Formats.** Focuses on the ways in which the teacher maximizes students' interest, engagement, and ability to learn from lessons and activities. *Young children are still developing their senses and social emotional and cognitive characteristics. Because of this WPS was designed to engage children across domains, primarily social-emotional but also physical and cognitive, and across their senses (sight, sound, touch). In addition, the activities primarily use real pictures which give young children who are still learning and very curious about the world they live in, a more authentic and therefore interesting experience. By focusing and bringing to the forefront the "whole" child, they are immersed in a learning experience that meets their needs and interests. Further, the progress monitoring information also has the capability of enhancing and strengthening classroom interactions away from the computer.*

California Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 1: Social-Emotional

As mentioned above, because WPS activities weave in cognitive skills and academic areas of literacy and mathematics, they will also support the Learning Foundations in those areas for preschoolers, with 85% of the skills represented in WePlaySmart by Hatch.

Self

1.0 Self-Awareness

48 months: 1.1 Describe their physical characteristics, behavior, and abilities positively.

60 months: 1.1 Compare their characteristics with those of others and display a growing awareness of their psychological characteristics, such as thoughts and feelings.

2.0 Self-Regulation

48 months: 2.1 Need adult guidance in managing their attention, feelings, and impulses and show some effort at self control.

60 months: 2.1 Regulate their attention, thought feelings, and impulses more contently, although adult guidance is sometimes necessary.

3.0 Social and Emotional Understanding

48 months: 3.1 Seek to understand people's feelings and behavior, notice diversity in human characteristics, and are interested in how people are similar and different.

60 months: 3.1 Begin to comprehend the mental and psychological reasons people act as they do and how they contribute to differences between people.

4.0 Empathy and Caring

48 months: 4.1 Demonstrate concern for the needs of others and people in distress.

60 months: 4.1 Respond to another's distress and needs with sympathetic caring and are more likely to assist.

5.0 Initiative in Learning

48 months: 5.1 Enjoy learning and are confident in their abilities to make new discoveries although may not persist at solving difficult problems.

60 months: 5.1 Take greater initiative in making new discoveries, identifying new solutions, and persisting in trying to figure things out.

Social Interaction

2.0 Interactions with Peers

48 months: 2.1 Interact easily with peers in shared activities that occasionally become cooperative efforts. **2.2** Participate in simple sequences of pretend play. **2.3** Seek assistance in resolving peer conflict, especially when disagreements have escalated into physical aggression.

60 months: 2.1 More actively and intentionally cooperate with each other. **2.2** Create more complex sequences of pretend play that involve planning, coordination of roles, and cooperation. **2.3** Negotiate with each other, seeking adult assistance when needed, and increasingly use words to respond to conflict.

3.0 Group Participation

48 months: 3.1 Participate in group activities and are beginning to understand and cooperate with social expectations, group rules, and roles.

60 months: 3.1 Participate positively and cooperatively as group members.

4.0 Cooperation and Responsibility

48 months: 4.1 Seek to cooperate with adult instructions but their capacities for self-control are limited, especially when they are frustrated or upset.

60 months: 4.1 Have growing capacities for self-control and are motivated to cooperate in order to receive adult approval and think approvingly of themselves.

Relationships

3.0 Friendships

48 months: 3.1 Choose to play with one or two special peers whom they identify as friends.

60 months: 3.1 Friendships are more reciprocal, exclusive, and enduring.