

## **Become a Better Teacher by Knowing Your Students**

### **Children – 3-4 Years Old**

- Learning how they relate to their family (and to people outside of their family)
- Learning to separate from family members for short, predictable periods of time
- Learning to tell stories of their own, using more than one sentence or thought
- Learning numbers in sequence, and how to count small objects
- Learning the alphabet and simple songs
- Perfecting large motor skills (legs and upper arms)
  - Running, Jumping, Climbing
  - Standing on one foot/ balancing
  - Walking up and down stairs
  - Dancing, Hopping, Marching
  - Kicking a ball, throwing a ball
- Developing fine motor skills (hand and fingers)
  - Clapping hands, picking up small objects, early coloring
  - Working with clay / Play-Doh, very early drawing, Finger-painting
  - Early writing and tracing skills
  - Songs with hand and finger motions
  - Very early work with things like scissors and glue (with lots of supervision!)
- Developmental Characteristics
  - Beginning to separate reality from fantasy
  - Learning through the senses
  - Limited understanding of time and space
  - Literal, concrete thinker
  - Imaginative, curious, imitative, expanding vocabulary
  - Desires to please
  - Wants to be independent but lives dependently
  - Enjoys group play, but struggles to achieve it
  - Fearful and emotional
  - Talkative
  - Desires and seeks attention
  - Beginning to develop a self-image
- Children in this age group enjoy these types of play:
  - imagining things and “pretend” play
  - playing in groups of 2 or 3 children their own age
  - playing games with larger groups of children for short periods of time
  - exploring new sounds, textures, colors, smells, tastes
  - sorting by color, shape, size, and similarities
- Hearing and Understanding Bible Stories
  - Able to listen to and understand short Bible stories
  - Able to remember main person in story
  - Able to remember and repeat a few main points in story
- Very concrete in their thinking

- Spiritual messages they need to hear
  - God cares about you and your family (mother/father/brothers/sisters/etc)
  - God made everything.
  - God/Jesus loves you.
  - God made you.
  - You are special and unique (and valuable to God and others.)
  - God hears our prayers.
  - God is... (Dependable, Trustworthy, Always Good)
  - There is a difference between right and wrong
  - Taught how to worship
  - Modeling of forgiveness