
Victoria, Texas Touts Curiosity Corner as Successful Pre-K Program



**By Cathy Peace, Early Childhood Specialist and Curiosity Corner Coach
Victoria ISD – SFA Year 8, Curiosity Corner Year 2, Leadership Academy Year 2
Victoria, Texas**

Due to the high standards for learning based on recent brain research and the child-centered design of this program, teachers are becoming more knowledgeable about the best practices to use to instruct young learners in our district. Curiosity Corner has provided the pathway for effectively teaching the state objectives while ensuring consistency across the 18 pre-k classrooms in our district.

Victoria Independent School District is in the second year of implementation of this program. During this brief time our teachers have grown into a cohesive group and begun to feel like an important member of the vertical team of teachers on their campus. Knowing and appreciating the value of providing effective instruction in language, literacy, and numeracy through early childhood education is a result of our district's leadership placing emphasis on that crucial time in a child's development.

Teachers repeatedly share the biggest difference they see in using this program is in the development of the children's language. Pro-social behaviors and self-help skills are another area of great growth as children are encouraged to initiate activities and make choices. Teachers have grown professionally as they embrace new attitudes about what young children are capable of learning.

The Success for All Foundation has provided

tremendous support from consultants, program developers, and regional managers. Implementation visits conducted by consultants, Pattie Reda and Teri Vela, have been most helpful in identifying and clarifying expected teacher and student outcomes for the components of Curiosity Corner. The Coaches Conference conducted by Maureen Keck in Seattle in October of 2003 proved to be a great source of information, guidance and networking opportunities for our mentor team. Our regional manager, Dan Maluski, has been involved in promoting our early childhood efforts as well. Because of the nature of this comprehensive program, not only do we have materials and lesson plans, but we have a network of support to call upon.

In Victoria our young learners are engaged in planned, purposeful, and playful activities. Teachers feel they are supported and recognized for their contributions. District leaders are pleased with our efforts and accomplishments as we continue to follow the Curiosity Corner program's framework and philosophy for teaching the whole child. In Victoria, Curiosity Cat is our newest mascot and symbol for success.



Editor's note: To learn more about the Victoria ISD, visit their website at www.visd.com.