

# Preschool teaching activity: poison safety assignment

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Two student nurses were given an assignment to visit American Lutheran Preschool and teach the preschoolers the safety of poisons. While planning this project they researched how a preschooler learns affectively “ Children learn best by actively participating in learning,” and “ Learning occurs best if rewards, not penalties, are offered” (Pillitteri, 2007). They began their teaching plan based on these learning effective teaching measures and incorporated them into their poison presentation.

Secondly, three objectives were identified to teach about poisons for their presentation and included; Define a poison, Introduce Spike, and sing the poison safety song, and play the Spike stay away game. These objectives are aimed at preschoolers aging from three to five years of age, since they include a song and game. The two nursing students’ presentation was aimed not only on learning about poisons but for the children to enjoy the activities as well.

Throughout their planning they incorporated different teaching strategies to help the child learn, and for the nursing students to effectively establish an understanding from the preschoolers of their response to the information given. “ Because children’s knowledge base, capabilities, learning styles, and attention spans vary, teaching strategies should be intermixed” (Pillitteri, 2007). The teaching strategies include; lecture, demonstration, redemonstration, discussion and role modeling (Pillitteri, 2007).

Although lecturing to a preschooler may sound ineffective the nursing students wanted to explain in simple terms what a poison was. They explained a poison can be anything that you can see, smell, taste, touch and

can make you sick. They then introduced Spike whom they researched was the poison controls mascot. Spike is a child friendly porcupine, and he is able to identify trouble as when a poison is present his quills turn up. The nursing students used Spike the puppet to help teach the importance of poisons by letting each child have a puppet to use in class and also to take home and teach their parents about Spike and his message.

The nursing students demonstrated Spikes ability to detect poisons by saying “ stay away” and if no poison is present and a parent gave the child something to drink, like milk, then Spike says “ its okay” (U. S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). To see if they understood pictures and bottles of household items were brought in and the preschoolers used Spike to say what they would do if around a household item. The children were praised for actively participating. After the puppet was presented then the nursing students asked questions like “ Can you name a place in your house where you would find any poisons? This helped in the discussion, each child stated a place or experience they had with a poison. During the presentation the nursing students were good role models as seen by smiling and praising the children. They also used positive reinforcement as shown by the teacher prior to the presentation. Before the poison safety activity the nursing students were able to interact with the children, and see how the teacher used positive reinforcement for her class and possibly use the same idea since the children are already familiar with the teacher’s terminology.

When a student would say the right answer or successfully perform a good task the teacher would say “ kiss your brain” and all the children did so by

kissing their hand and placing it on their head. This reinforcement was used by the two nursing students and the children appropriately responded.

Throughout the presentation the two nursing students were evaluating the children's response and how effective the teaching was. The students asked questions at the end of the presentation to make sure the topic was effectively presented. The children had quit a few questions, and comments on poisons they know about.

From the day the students were assigned this task they began brainstorming ideas and discussing which topic to use, when to present and where. They individually researched information and came together the week prior to the presentation and narrowed down their ideas. The day before the presentation they practiced their outline and what each person would say and how to monitor their effectiveness, by the children's reaction. The last meeting was the morning of the presentation to do a dry run of the presentation using the puppets and household items as well as practicing the song together.

When they arrived to the school they were separated and each assigned a classroom to observe prior to presenting to each classroom together. They used this opportunity to meet and interact with the children they would be teaching. One of the nursing students discussed with the teacher the ages of the children and she found her class was all age's three to five and all the children were English speaking, as well as finding out how one child has already had a negative experience with a poison. The children were well

behaved throughout the morning and the nursing student felt her presentation was well organized and age appropriate.

After the presentation was given both students felt the objectives were met fully. The children were able to give examples of a poison at their house and or school, and what to do if a poison is present. Each student took Spike home with them and we encouraged them to share with their parents and siblings the Spike song and game. When the presentation was done this was the time parents were picking up their child and the nursing students observed a few children showing their parents Spike and handing them the flier that was passed out on how to poison proof your home (U.

S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). The day the students visited one of the classrooms was having uniform day, and a girl had on little girl scrubs. The student in this class asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up and she said “ A nurse. ” The teacher explained how here mommy was a nurse and daddy was a doctor. “ They pretend to be teachers, cowboys, firefighters, and store clerks” (Pillitteri, 2007). Preschoolers are going through different growth and development stages as seen by the nursing students visiting.

At the beginning of the class on the table was the children’s home telephone number and they had to try and find their home phone number in the pile of numbers all by themselves. For some children this was quit a challenge and for others they were able to say their phone number over and over. “ Giving own address and phone number” (Pillitteri, 2007). Another example of

growth and developmental stages can be seen on the playground as children learn to interact with each other.

Recess time came and as soon as the door opened to outside all the girls jumped on this bicycle ride, where you sit on a bike and everyone pedals at the same time and all the bicycles go in a circle together, the girls were laughing. This is a normal growth and developmental task “ pedaling a riding toy” (Pillitteri, 2007). “ The developmental task for the preschool age child is to achieve a sense of initiative” (Pillitteri, 2007). At the beginning of the day the children are dropped off by their parents and there are a variety of activities for them to participate in individually or as a group.

This classroom had a sand box, clay, color pencils and a station to make lollipop flowers. The preschooler has many activities to enjoy and it is up to them to decide which activity they want to participate in. “ To gain a sense of initiative, preschoolers need exposure to a wide variety of experiences and play materials so they can learn as much about the world as possible” (Pillitteri, 2007). The student was helping a boy make lollipop flowers and a girl sat next to her and began to play with clay, she soon tapped the student on the shoulder and said “ LOOK! ” as she pointed to the green glittery clay.

The student looking at the clay honestly did not know what the little girl had created with the clay but the girl looked very proud of her clay, so the nursing student smiled right back at her and told her how pretty her clay was. “ Preschoolers may make nothing recognizable out of clay or finger paint, preferring simply to handle the medium” (Pillitteri, 2007). In the class there was a set of triplets who just returned from a trip to Disney land. They

shared their experiences and favorite parts at snack time. “ They are interested in seeing new places, and especially enjoy going with the family on vacation” (Pillitteri, 2007).

Each child in the class was unique and wanted to share their experiences with the nursing students. The students enjoyed their interaction with the children and felt the preschoolers are safer now that they have an understanding of poisons and what to do around them. References Pillitteri, A. (2007) Maternal and Child Health Nursing: Care of the Childbearing and Childrearing Family (5th ed. ) Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins. U. S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. American Association of Poison Control Centers. (2002). Quills Up- Stay Away! Retrived April 1, 2007, from [http://www. 1-800222-1222. info](http://www.1-800222-1222.info)