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## Head Start Rotation

Head Start is a federally funded program that promotes the school readiness of children from birth to 5 years old who originate from low-income families. This program provides services that enhance the children's cognitive, social and emotional development. I had the opportunity to visit a Head Start location in Orem, Utah where my partner and I prepared and administered a short lesson. We presented our lesson to a class of 3-4 year old children about where wheat comes from and how to choose foods that contain whole wheat.

The most important lesson that I learned is structuring an activity properly toward the target audience. The lesson that we prepared to the class was more advanced than what they could comprehend. For example, we described the process of making wheat; 1) plant a seed in the dirt 2) water it 3) give it sunshine 4) harvest it into flour 5) use the flour to make bread 6) use the bread to make sandwiches. After we described the process of wheat, we tried to sing a song about the process of wheat and have the class help us recall how wheat is made, but the kids seemed quite clueless. During the song we helped fill in what they did not know but overall, that part of the lesson was quite ineffective. However, we emphasized that it is important to eat whole wheat (also known as brown bread). The one thing that we know that they remembered from our lesson (because we had them repeat it three times) is that brown bread is good choice of food to eat. We hope that they truly did remember that part of the lesson so that they could share that information with their families.

In a professional setting, I learned that it is important to understand the cognitive level of my audience. Once or twice during my lesson, I said a word that the children did not understand. When I tried to explain the meaning of the word, I could not effectively do so. Therefore, I chose to rephrase the entire statement in order for the children to understand my point. In the future, I need to be prepared to explain words that children do not understand in an effective way. I may also want to choose better phrases that can replace the bigger words. A lesson is not effective if the audience cannot understand how it is being delivered.

Head Start is an amazing program to help low income children get a boost in their growth and development. I noticed that this program had great strength in its support system through the head teacher in the class as well as the teacher helpers. The teachers were warm and inviting, social and accepting, as well as encouraging and patient. During mealtime, I personally observed all of these great attributes in each teacher. The children responded well with the teachers because I believe the children knew how much the teachers cared for them. A limitation that the program has is that the children were of different ages within one classroom. This makes it difficult to cater to each child's need because of the variance in cognitive and social development in each age group. If children were divided up into their age groups, then more effective lessons could be taught that focused on their comprehension level.

I am grateful for the opportunity to provide my time and talents to these children. I learned more about how I can use my BS degree in Dietetics to help children grow to their fullest potential in communities. I enjoy knowing that by helping children at a young age, I can therefore help improve their future.