



Children Study Their World: An Overview

What is *Children Study Their World (CSW)*?

CSW is an early childhood curriculum for 4-year-olds, based on principles of **project-based inquiry** and driven by evidence-based practices that build teacher capacity and support successful implementation. It consists of **eight interdisciplinary, content-rich projects** that build upon children's knowledge and increase in complexity. Each project supports children's **common understanding** of a topic and **nurtures their innate sense of curiosity** and discovery about their world.

CSW was created by the Center for Early Childhood Education and Intervention at the University of Maryland. Funding for CSW was provided through a grant from the Maryland State Department of Education.

What makes CSW unique?

CSW is an electronic curriculum, published in **iBooks** form for use on the iPad. It includes **embedded online resources**, such as videos and songs, as well as links to online resources and ideas that teachers can use to support children's questions and challenge their thinking. By using an iPad, teachers have **instant access** to Internet resources, can **quickly document children's work** with photos or video, can access the **Maryland Early Learning Assessment**, and have the **entire curriculum at their fingertips!**

In each project of CSW, **children** ask questions, guide planning, explore and discover, and share their learning. **Teachers** model curiosity, observe children's level of understanding, and help them represent what they learned in different ways.

How does CSW prepare children for kindergarten?

CSW is fully aligned with **Maryland's Early Learning Standards** and **Early Learning Assessment (ELA)**. Formative assessments are provided in each lesson, so that teachers can observe and track children's development and learning within the seven domains defined by the Maryland Early Learning Standards:

- Science
- Social Studies



- Social Foundations
- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics
- The Arts
- Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

Does CSW allow for customization?

While CSW contains detailed lesson plans, teachers have the freedom (and are encouraged!) to **tailor their instruction** to their class. Some examples of curriculum modifications include:

Project	Example Content	Possible Modification
Busy Bodies	A health expert, such as a doctor or nurse, is invited to visit the class.	The teacher can invite other guest experts, such as the school’s physical education teacher or school nurse. A child’s parent may be a medical student, nutritionist, or work in a doctor’s office. Instead of an in-person visit, the expert may also “visit” the class via video call.
Showtime	Children create and act out a performance based on the storybook <i>“The Mitten.”</i>	If children have another favorite story, the teacher can adapt the lessons to focus on children’s favorite story.
All Aboard	Children visit a bus station and construct a bus out of a large cardboard box.	The teacher can use his or her local resources and choose to focus on the type of transportation that is available in the community. For example, different communities may have access to light rail, ferries, or an airport.

How can teachers customize CSW to meet the needs of their children?

CSW provides guidance on how to make sure the lessons are accessible to all children, including:

- Reminders to align children’s IEP goals when planning instructional and assessment strategies



- Planning templates to support specially designed instruction for children with IEPs
- Examples of instructional modifications and step-by-step guidance on implementing specially designed instruction
- Universal Design for Learning principles built into each lesson
- Suggested strategies to support English learners
- Options for lesson enrichment
- Suggestions for independent exploration at targeted and related learning centers
- Extensions for moving learning outdoors
- Additional ideas on how to customize lessons that reflect children’s interests and learning needs, as well as the community/environment in which they live
- How to engage family members in supporting their child’s learning

Why is the curriculum housed on the iBooks and iTunes U platforms?

As you will see, the *CSW* project books are all hosted within iBooks. CECEI chose to use iBooks as the primary vehicle for the *CSW* curriculum as they offer the following benefits and more:

- Both iBooks and the iPads and iPhones that host them offer consistent and user-friendly interfaces.
- The iBooks platform offers numerous multimedia and customization features that enable *CSW* to provide features and a simplicity of navigation unavailable in any other medium.
- iBooks offer advantages vs. print books in page/book navigation and portability.
- Using digital books for a widely-distributed curriculum saves paper on a large scale.

The entire *CSW* curriculum and accompanying resources will be available via the iTunesU app starting in the summer of 2019. iTunes U will provide many benefits for implementation of the curriculum, including the following:

- iTunes U will allow teachers, with permission, to access *CSW* resources on school-owned or personal Apple iOS devices, including iPads and iPhones.
- The iTunes U platform allows us to create a user-friendly presentation of the curriculum and instructional materials that flows project by project.
- iTunes U allows *CSW* to quickly disseminate new materials and updates to teachers.