

*Developmentally Appropriate Practice
in Early Childhood Programs
Serving Children
From Birth Through Age 8*

EXPANDED EDITION

SUE BREDEKAMP, *Editor*

**National Association for the
Education of Young Children**

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National Association for the Education of Young Children—Washington, DC

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The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) attempts through its publications program to provide a forum for discussion of major issues and ideas in our field. We hope to provoke thought and promote professional growth. The views expressed or implied are not necessarily those of the Association. NAEYC wishes to thank the authors, who donated much time and effort to develop this book as a contribution to our profession.

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Preface

When the first edition of this book was published in November 1986, it was quickly apparent that a major need had been addressed. In the next 10 months, 25,000 copies (and more than 85,000 copies of a brochure entitled “Good Teaching Practices for 4- and 5-Year-Olds”) were distributed. The first edition included a broad statement describing developmentally appropriate practice across the full age span of early childhood—birth through age 8—and more detailed descriptions of appropriate and inappropriate practices for infants and toddlers and for 4- and 5-year-olds. These age groups were described in greater detail because they were the areas where the greatest need for clarification had been expressed. Several trends contributed to the need for these clear definitions of appropriate practice including the trend toward increased numbers of infants and toddlers in group care and the concern that kindergarten and even prekindergarten programs were becoming watered-down first grades with too much emphasis on teacher-directed instruction in narrowly defined academic skills.

Immediately, readers of the book’s first edition informed NAEYC of other areas in need of clear descriptions of appropriate practice—programs serving 3-year-olds and primary grade schools. This expanded edition contains all the material from the first book plus new chapters on appropriate practices for 3-year-olds and for primary grades; successful transitions; and strategies to inform others about developmentally appropriate practice. These statements include descriptions of inappropriate as well as appropriate practices because people often learn what to do by learning what *not* to do. Sensitive readers will soon see that the younger the children are, the more inappropriate practices appear neglectful or border on abusive.

It was during the development of NAEYC’s accreditation system, the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, that the need for a clearer definition of developmentally appropriate practice first arose. Many of

the accreditation Criteria refer to “developmentally appropriate activities . . . materials . . . or expectations.” Without further information, these Criteria are subject to varying interpretations. Now that the accreditation system is operating, it has become even more important to have clear descriptions of the meaning of key terms, and no concept is more key to defining quality than “developmental appropriateness.”

This book represents the early childhood profession’s consensus definition of developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs. It is intended for use by teachers, administrators, parents, policymakers, and others involved with programs serving young children, birth through age 8, in schools, centers, and homes. As with so many NAEYC projects, it represents the thoughtful suggestions and careful review of hundreds of early childhood professionals.

The concept of developmentally appropriate practice can be summarized, to use Hunt’s phrase, as a problem of the match. What is perfectly acceptable for one age group is inappropriate for another because it does not match the child’s developmental level. Just as acceptable elementary school practice is often inappropriate for preschoolers, many common preschool practices are inappropriate for toddlers. We shudder at those who would teach 4-year-olds like fourth graders, but we must also shake our heads when 18-month-olds are expected to function like 4-year-olds.

Development is a truly fascinating and wonderful phenomenon. It is not something to be accelerated or skipped. One period of childhood or aspect of development is not better or more important than another; each has its own tasks to accomplish. Hopefully, the descriptions of developmentally appropriate practice in this book will help adults who work with young children provide the best quality care and education for each child so that they in turn may develop to their fullest potential.

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PART 1

NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8

Introduction

The quality of our nation's educational system has come under intense public scrutiny in the 1980s. While much of the attention has been directed at secondary and postsecondary education, the field of early childhood education must also examine its practices in light of current knowledge of child development and learning.

The purpose of this paper is to describe developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs for administrators, teachers, parents, policy makers, and others who make decisions about the care and education of young children. An early childhood program is any part-day or full-day group program in a center, school, or other facility that serves children from birth through age 8. Early childhood programs include child care centers, private and public preschools, kindergartens, and primary grade schools.

Rationale

In recent years, a trend toward increased emphasis on formal instruction in academic skills has emerged in early childhood programs. This trend toward formal academic instruction for younger children is based on misconceptions about early learning (Elkind, 1986). Despite the trend among some educators to formalize instruction, there has been no comparable evidence of change in what young children need for optimal devel-

opment or how they learn. In fact, a growing body of research has emerged recently affirming that children learn most effectively through a concrete, play-oriented approach to early childhood education.

In addition to an increased emphasis on academics, early childhood programs have experienced other changes. The number of programs has increased in response to the growing demand for out-of-home care and education during the early years. Some characteristics of early childhood programs have also changed in the last few years. For example, children are now enrolled in programs at younger ages, many from infancy. The length of the program day for all ages of children has been extended in response to the need for extended hours of care for employed families. Similarly, program sponsorship has become more diverse. The public schools are playing a larger role in providing prekindergarten programs or before- and after-school child care. Corporate America is also becoming a more visible sponsor of child care programs.

Programs have changed in response to social, economic, and political forces; however, these changes have not always taken into account the basic developmental needs of young children, which have remained constant. The trend toward early academics, for example, is antithetical to what we know about how young children learn. Programs should be tailored to meet the needs of children, rather than expecting children to adjust to the demands of a specific program.

Position Statement

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) believes that a high quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children while re-

sponding to the needs of families. Although the quality of an early childhood program may be affected by many factors, a major determinant of program quality is the extent to which knowledge of child development is applied in program practices—the degree to which



The curriculum and adults' interaction are responsive to individual differences in ability and interests.

the program is *developmentally appropriate*. NAEYC believes that high quality, developmentally appropriate programs should be available to all children and their families.

In this position paper, the concept of *developmental appropriateness* will first be defined. Then guidelines will be presented describing how developmental appropriateness can be applied to four components of early childhood programs: curriculum; adult-child interactions; relations between the home and program; and developmental evaluation of children. The statement concludes with a discussion of major policy implications and recommendations. These guidelines are designed to be used in conjunction with NAEYC's Criteria for High Quality Early Childhood Programs, the standards for accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC, 1984).

Definition of developmental appropriateness

The concept of *developmental appropriateness* has two dimensions: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness.

1. **Age appropriateness.** Human development research indicates that there are universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in children during the first 9 years of life. These predictable changes occur in all domains of development—physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span served by the program provides a framework from which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences.
2. **Individual appropriateness.** Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style, and family background. Both the curriculum and adults' interactions with children should be responsive to individual differences. Learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. These experiences should match the child's developing abilities, while also challenging the child's interest and understanding.

Teachers can use child development knowledge to identify the range of appropriate behaviors, activities, and materials for a specific age group. This knowledge

is used in conjunction with understanding about individual children's growth patterns, strengths, interests, and experiences to design the most appropriate learning environment. Although the content of the curriculum is determined by many factors such as tradition, the subject matter of the disciplines, social or cultural values, and parental desires, for the content and teaching strategies to be developmentally appropriate they must be age appropriate and individually appropriate.

Children's play is a primary vehicle for and indicator of their mental growth. Play enables children to pro-

gress along the developmental sequence from the sensorimotor intelligence of infancy to preoperational thought in the preschool years to the concrete operational thinking exhibited by primary children (Fein, 1979; Fromberg, 1986; Piaget, 1952; Sponseller, 1982). In addition to its role in cognitive development, play also serves important functions in children's physical, emotional, and social development (Herron & Sutton-Smith, 1974). Therefore, child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is an essential component of developmentally appropriate practice (Fein & Rivkin, 1986).

Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice

I. Curriculum

A developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children is planned to be appropriate for the age span of the children within the group and is implemented with attention to the different needs, interests, and developmental levels of those individual children.

A. Developmentally appropriate curriculum provides for all areas of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive through an integrated approach (Almy, 1975; Biber, 1984; Elkind, 1986; Forman & Kushner, 1983; Kline, 1985; Skeen, Garner, & Cartwright, 1984; Spodek, 1985).

Realistic curriculum goals for children should address all of these areas in age-appropriate ways. Children's learning does not occur in narrowly defined subject areas; their development and learning are integrated. Any activity that stimulates one dimension of development and learning affects other dimensions as well.

B. Appropriate curriculum planning is based on teachers' observations and recordings of each child's special interests and developmental progress (Almy, 1975; Biber, 1984; Cohen, Stern, & Balaban, 1983; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1982).

Realistic curriculum goals and plans are based on regular assessment of individual

needs, strengths, and interests. Curriculum is based on both age-appropriate and individually appropriate information. For example, individual children's family/cultural backgrounds—such as expressive styles, ways of interacting, play, and games—are used to broaden the curriculum for all children.

C. Curriculum planning emphasizes learning as an interactive process. Teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials (Biber, 1984; Fein, 1979; Forman & Kushner, 1983; Fromberg, 1986; Goffin & Tull, 1985; Griffin, 1982; Kamii, 1985; Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1986; Powell, 1986; Sponseller, 1982).

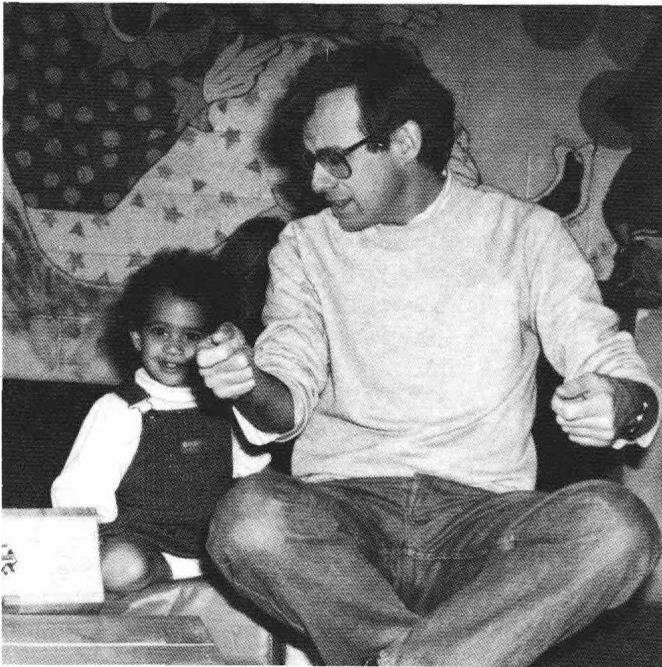
The process of interacting with materials and people results in learning. Finished products or "correct" solutions that conform to adult standards are not very accurate criteria for judging whether learning has occurred. Much of young children's learning takes place when they direct their own play activities. During play, children feel successful when they engage in a task they have defined for themselves, such as finding their way through an obstacle course with a friend or pouring water into and out of various containers. Such learning should not be inhibited by adult-established concepts of completion, achievement, and failure. Activities should be designed to concentrate on furthering

emerging skills through creative activity and intense involvement.

- D. Learning activities and materials should be concrete, real, and relevant to the lives of young children** (Almy, 1975; Biber, 1984; Evans, 1984; Forman & Kushner, 1983; Hawkins, 1970; Hirsch, 1984; Holt, 1979; Kamii, 1985; Kline, 1985; Piaget, 1972; Schickedanz, 1986; Seefeldt, 1986; Smith, 1985; Weber, 1984).

Children need years of play with real objects and events before they are able to understand the meaning of symbols such as letters and numbers. Learning takes place as young children touch, manipulate, and experiment with things and interact with people. Throughout early childhood, children's concepts and language gradually develop to enable them to understand more abstract or symbolic information. Pictures and stories should be used frequently to build upon children's real experiences.

Workbooks, worksheets, coloring books, and adult-made models of art products for children to copy are *not* appropriate for young children, especially those younger than 6. Children older than 5 show increasing abilities to learn through written exercises, oral presentations, and other adult-directed teaching strategies.



Child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is an essential component of developmentally appropriate practice.

However, the child's active participation in self-directed play with concrete, real-life experiences continues to be a key to motivated, meaningful learning in kindergarten and the primary grades.

Basic learning materials and activities for an appropriate curriculum include sand, water, clay, and accessories to use with them; hollow, table, and unit blocks; puzzles with varying numbers of pieces; many types of games; a variety of small manipulative toys; dramatic play props such as those for housekeeping and transportation; a variety of science investigation equipment and items to explore; a changing selection of appropriate and aesthetically pleasing books and recordings; supplies of paper, water-based paint and markers, and other materials for creative expression; large muscle equipment; field trips; classroom responsibilities, such as helping with routines; and positive interactions and problem-solving opportunities with other children and adults.

- E. Programs provide for a wider range of developmental interests and abilities than the chronological age range of the group would suggest. Adults are prepared to meet the needs of children who exhibit unusual interests and skills outside the normal developmental range** (Kitano, 1982; Languis, Sanders, & Tipps, 1980; Schickedanz, Schickedanz, & Forsyth, 1982; Souweine, Crimmins, & Mazel, 1981; Uphoff & Gilmore, 1985).

Activities and equipment should be provided for a chronological age range which in many cases is at least 12 months. However, the normal developmental age range in any group may be as much as 2 years. Some mainstreamed situations will demand a wider range of expectations. When the developmental age range of a group is more than 18 months, the need increases for a large variety of furnishings, equipment, and teaching strategies. The complexity of materials should also reflect the age span of the group. For example, a group that includes 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds would need books of varying length and complexity; puzzles with varying numbers and sizes of pieces; games that require a range of skills and abilities to follow rules; and other diverse materials, teaching methods, and room arrangements.

F. Teachers provide a variety of activities and materials; teachers increase the difficulty, complexity, and challenge of an activity as children are involved with it and as children develop understanding and skills (Davidson, 1985; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Forman & Kaden, 1986; Gerber, 1982; Gilbert, 1981; Gonzalez-Mena & Eyer, 1980; Greenberg, 1976; Hill, 1979; Hirsch, 1984; Holt, 1979; Honig, 1980, 1981; Kamii, 1982, 1985; Kamii & DeVries, 1980; Lasky & Mukerji, 1980; McDonald, 1979; National Institute of Education, 1984; Schickedanz, 1986; Smith, 1982; Smith, 1983; Sparling, 1984; Stewart, 1982; Veach, 1977; Willert & Kamii, 1985; Willis & Ricciuti, 1975).

As children work with materials or activities, teachers listen, observe, and interpret children's behavior. Teachers can then facilitate children's involvement and learning by asking questions, making suggestions, or adding more complex materials or ideas to a situation. During a program year, as well as from one year to another, activities and environments



Carolyn Williams

Learning activities and materials should be concrete, real, and relevant to the lives of young children.

for children should change in arrangement and inventory, and special events should also be planned. Examples of developmentally appropriate learning activities for various age groups follow.

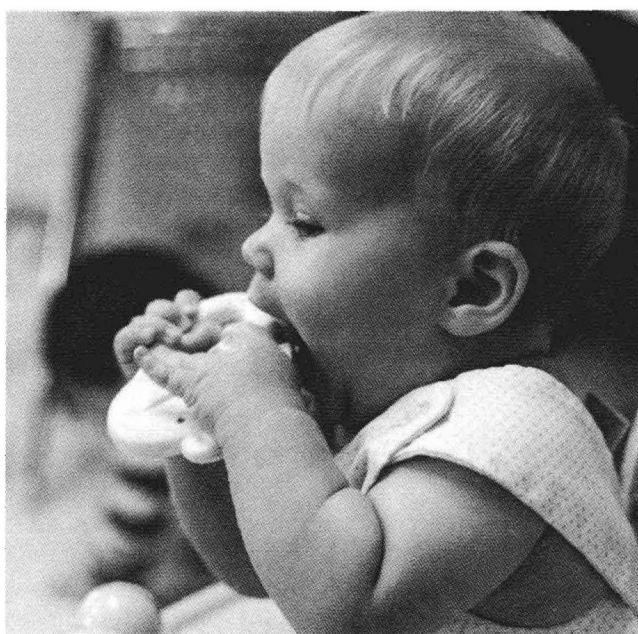
1. Infants and toddlers

Infants and toddlers learn by experiencing the environment through their senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling), by physically moving around, and through social interaction. Nonmobile infants absorb and organize a great deal of information about the world around them, so adults talk and sing with them about what is happening and bring them objects to observe and manipulate. At times adults carry nonmobile infants around the environment to show them interesting events and people. Mobile infants and toddlers increasingly use toys, language, and other learning materials in their play.

Adults play a vital socialization role with infants and toddlers. Warm, positive relationships with adults help infants develop a sense of trust in the world and feelings of competence. These interactions are critical for the development of the children's healthy self-esteem. The trusted adult becomes the secure base from which the mobile infant or toddler explores the environment.

Important independence skills are being acquired during these years, including personal care such as toileting, feeding, and dressing. The most appropriate teaching technique for this age group is to give ample opportunities for the children to use self-initiated repetition to practice newly acquired skills and to experience feelings of autonomy and success. Infants will bat at, grasp, bang, or drop their toys. Patience is essential as a toddler struggles to put on a sweater. Imitation, hiding, and naming games are also important for learning at this age. Realistic toys will enable children to engage in increasingly complex types of play.

Two-year-olds are learning to produce language rapidly. They need simple books, pictures, puzzles, and music, and time and space for active play such as jumping, running, and dancing. Toddlers are acquiring



David Phillips

Infants and toddlers learn by experiencing the environment through their senses.

social skills, but in groups there should be several of the same toy because egocentric toddlers are not yet able to understand the concept of sharing.

2. Three-, 4-, and 5-year-olds

Curriculum for 3-year-olds should emphasize language, activity, and movement, with major emphasis on large muscle activity. Appropriate activities include dramatic play, wheel toys and climbers, puzzles and blocks, and opportunities to talk and listen to simple stories.

Four-year-olds enjoy a greater variety of experiences and more small motor activities like scissors, art, manipulatives, and cooking. They are more able to concentrate and remember as well as recognize objects by shape, color, or size. Four-year-olds are developing basic math concepts and problem-solving skills.

Some 4-year-olds and most 5-year-olds combine ideas into more complex relations (for example, number concepts such as one-to-one correspondence) and have growing memory capacity and fine motor physical skills. Some 4-year-olds and most 5s display a growing interest in the functional aspects of written language, such as recognizing meaningful words and trying to write their

own names. Activities designed solely to teach the alphabet, phonics, and penmanship are much less appropriate for this age group than providing a print-rich environment that stimulates the development of language and literacy skills in a meaningful context.

Curriculum for 4s and 5s can expand beyond the child's immediate experience of self, home, and family to include special events and trips. Five-year-olds are developing interest in community and the world outside their own. They also use motor skills well, even daringly, and show increasing ability to pay attention for longer times and in larger groups if the topic is meaningful.

3. Six-, 7-, and 8-year-olds

Six-year-olds are active and demonstrate considerable verbal ability; they are becoming interested in games and rules and develop concepts and problem-solving skills from these experiences. Most 6-year-olds and many 7- and 8-year-olds may be more mature mentally than physically. Therefore, hands-on activity and experimentation is more appropriate for this age group than fatiguing mechanical seatwork.

Seven-year-olds seem to need time to catch up and practice with many newly acquired physical and cognitive skills. They become increasingly able to reason, to listen to others, and to show social give-and-take.

Eight-year-olds combine great curiosity with increased social interest. Now they are able to learn about other, more distant peoples. During first, second, and third grade, children can learn from the symbolic experiences of reading books and listening to stories; however, their understanding of what they read is based on their ability to relate the written word to their own experience. Primary grade children also learn to communicate through written language, dictating or writing stories about their own experiences or fantasies. The same is true of the development of number concepts. Children's mathematical concepts develop from their own thinking during games and real-life experiences that involve quantification, such as cooking or carpentry.



Marietta Lynch

Teachers increase the difficulty, complexity, and challenge of an activity as children are involved with it and as children develop understanding and skills.

G. Adults provide opportunities for children to choose from among a variety of activities, materials, and equipment; and time to explore through active involvement. Adults facilitate children's engagement with materials and activities and extend the child's learning by asking questions or making suggestions that stimulate children's thinking (Elkind, 1986; Forman & Kushner, 1983; Goffin & Tull, 1985; Kamii & Lee-Katz, 1979; Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1986; Sackoff & Hart, 1984; Skeen, Garner, & Cartwright, 1984; Sparling, 1984).

Children of all ages need uninterrupted periods of time to become involved, investigate, select, and persist at activities. The teacher's role in child-chosen activity is to prepare the environment with stimulating, challenging activity choices and then to facilitate children's engagement. In developmentally appropriate programs, adults:

1. provide a rich variety of activities and materials from which to choose.
Such variety increases the likelihood of a child's prolonged or satisfied attention and increases independence and opportunity for making decisions.
2. offer children the choice to participate in a small group or in a solitary activity.
3. assist and guide children who are not yet able to use easily and enjoy child-choice activity periods.
4. provide opportunities for child-initiated, child-directed practice of skills as a self-chosen activity.

Children need opportunities to repeat acquired skills to fully assimilate their learning. Repetition that is initiated and directed by the child, not adult-directed drill and practice, is most valuable for assimilation.

H. Multicultural and nonsexist experiences, materials, and equipment should be provided for children of all ages (Ramsey, 1979, 1982; Saracho & Spodek, 1983; Sprung, 1978).

Providing a wide variety of multicultural, nonstereotyping materials and activities helps

ensure the individual appropriateness of the curriculum and also

1. enhances each child's self-concept and self-esteem,
2. supports the integrity of the child's family,
3. enhances the child's learning processes in both the home and the early childhood program by strengthening ties,
4. extends experiences of children and their families to include knowledge of the ways of others, especially those who share the community, and
5. enriches the lives of all participants with respectful acceptance and appreciation of differences and similarities among them.

Multicultural experiences should not be limited to a celebration of holidays and should in-

clude foods, music, families, shelter, and other aspects common to all cultures.

I. Adults provide a balance of rest and active movement for children throughout the program day (Cratty, 1982; Curtis, 1986; Hendrick, 1986; Stewart, 1982; Willis & Ricciuti, 1975).

For infants and toddlers, naps and quiet activities such as listening to rhymes and music provide periodic rest from the intense physical exploration that is characteristic of this age group. Two-year-olds, and many 3s, will need morning and/or afternoon naps, and should also have periods of carefully planned transition to quieting-down or rousing, especially before and after eating and sleeping. Children at about 2½- to 3-years-old become able to maintain brief interest in occasional small-group, teacher-conducted activities, and may enjoy quiet stories, music, and fingerplays together between periods of intense activity. Most 4s and many 5s still need naps, especially if their waking days are very long as they are in some child care situations. Children at this age need planned alternations of active and quiet activities and are usually willing to participate in brief, interesting, small-group activities. Older children continue to need alternating periods of active and quiet activity throughout the day, beyond traditionally provided recess.

The pace of the program day will vary depending on the length of time children are present, but children should never be rushed and schedules should be flexible enough to take advantage of impromptu experiences. The balance between active and quiet activity should be maintained throughout the day by alternating activities.

J. Outdoor experiences should be provided for children of all ages (Cratty, 1982; Curtis, 1986; Frost & Klein, 1979).

Because their physical development is occurring so rapidly, young children through age 8 need daily outdoor experiences to practice large muscle skills, learn about outdoor environments, and experience freedom not always possible indoors. Outdoor time is an integral part of the curriculum and requires planning; it is not simply a time for children to release pent-up energy.



Nya Kwawon Tanyor

Multicultural experiences should not be limited to a celebration of holidays and should include foods, music, families, shelter, and other aspects common to all cultures.



Steve Herzog

Children should never be rushed and schedules should be flexible enough to take advantage of impromptu experiences. The balance between active and quiet activity should be maintained throughout the day.

II. Adult-Child Interaction

The developmental appropriateness of an early childhood program is most apparent in the interactions between adults and children. Developmentally appropriate interactions are based on adults' knowledge and expectations of age-appropriate behavior in children balanced by adults' awareness of individual differences among children.

A. Adults respond quickly and directly to children's needs, desires, and messages and adapt their responses to children's differing styles and abilities (Bell & Ainsworth, 1972; Erikson, 1950; Genishi, 1986; Greenspan & Greenspan, 1985; Honig, 1980, 1981; Lozoff, Brillenham, Trause, Kennell, & Klaus, 1977; Shure & Spivak, 1978; Smith & Davis, 1976).

Appropriate responses vary with the age of the child. Adults should respond immediately to infants' cries of distress. The response should be warm and soothing as the adult identifies the child's needs. Adults should also

respond appropriately to infants' vocalizations, manipulation of objects, and movement, as these are the ways infants communicate. Adults hold and touch infants frequently; talk and sing to infants in a soothing, friendly voice; smile and maintain eye contact with infants. For toddlers and 2-year-olds, adults remain close by, giving attention and physical comfort as needed. Adults repeat children's words, paraphrase, or use synonyms or actions to help assure toddlers that they are understood. As children get older, adult responses are characterized by less physical communication and more verbal responsiveness, although immediacy is still important. Positive responses such as smiles and interest, and concentrated attention on children's activity, are important. Adults move quietly and circulate among individuals in groups to communicate with children in a friendly and relaxed manner.



Subjects & Predicates

The developmental appropriateness of an early childhood program is most apparent in the interactions between adults and children.

From infancy through the primary grades, adult communication with children is facilitated by sitting low or kneeling, and making eye contact. With all age groups, adults should also be aware of the powerful influence of modeling and other nonverbal communication; adults' actions should be compatible with their verbal messages and confirm that children understand their messages.

B. Adults provide many varied opportunities for children to communicate (Cazden, 1981; Genishi, 1986; Gordon, 1970, 1975; Greenspan & Greenspan, 1985; Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera, 1986; McAfee, 1985; Schachter & Strage, 1982; Schickedanz, 1986).

Children acquire communication skills through hearing and using language, and as adults listen and respond to what children say. Communication skills grow out of the desire to use language to express needs, insights, and excitement, and to solve problems. Children do not learn language, or any other concepts, by being quiet and listening to a lecture from an adult. Listening experiences—when there is something meaningful to listen to such as a story or poetry—can enrich language learning. Most language interaction with infants and toddlers is on an individual basis, although occasionally a group of two or three children may gather to hear an absorbing story. Throughout the preschool years, individual abilities to sit and pay attention will vary considerably, but time periods are short and groups should be small. During kindergarten and the primary grades, children can listen to directions or stories for longer periods of time (gradually expanding as children get older). Individual and small group interactions are still the most effective because children have the opportunity for two-way communication with adults and other children. Total group instructional techniques are *not* as effective in facilitating the development of communication skills and other learning in young children.

Equally important are opportunities for children to engage in two-way communication with others. Infants use crying and body movements to communicate. Adult responses to this communication, including the use of soothing language and descriptions of what is happening, build the foundation for children's

ability to use language and their ability to feel good about themselves. Children rapidly expand their ability to understand language in their early years, and from about the age of 2, children can engage in increasingly interesting and lengthy conversations with adults and other children. These one-on-one exchanges are critical throughout the early years. Children's questions, and their responses to questions, particularly open-ended questions, provide valuable information about the individual's level of thinking.

C. Adults facilitate a child's successful completion of tasks by providing support, focused attention, physical proximity, and verbal encouragement. Adults recognize that children learn from trial and error and that children's misconceptions reflect their developing thoughts (Cohen, Stern, & Balaban, 1983; Elkind, 1986; Gottfried, 1983; Kamii, 1985; Piaget, 1950; Veach, 1977; Wallinga & Sweaney, 1985; Wellman, 1982; Zavitkovsky, Baker, Berlfein, & Almy, 1986).

Real successes are important incentives for people of all ages to continue learning and maintain motivation. Children learn from their own mistakes. Adults can examine the problem with the child and, if appropriate, encourage the child to try again or to find alternatives. Teachers plan many open-ended activities that have more than one right answer, and value the unique responses of individual children.

D. Teachers are alert to signs of undue stress in children's behavior, and aware of appropriate stress-reducing activities and techniques (Dreikurs, Grunwald, & Pepper, 1982; Elkind, 1986; Gazda, 1973; Honig, 1986; McCracken, 1986; Warren, 1977).

Formal, inappropriate instructional techniques are a source of stress for young children. When children exhibit stress-related behavior, teachers should examine the program to ensure that expectations are appropriate and not placing excessive demands on children.

When children experience stress from other sources, adults can find ways to reduce or eliminate the problem, or help children cope with it. Appropriate adult behaviors may include cuddling and soothing a crying infant; of-

fering a toddler a favorite toy; providing books, water play, body movement, music, and quiet times for older children; and physically comforting and listening to the concerns of a child of any age who is in distress. Children's responses to stress are as individual as their learning styles. An understanding adult who is sensitive to individual children's reactions is the key to providing appropriate comfort.

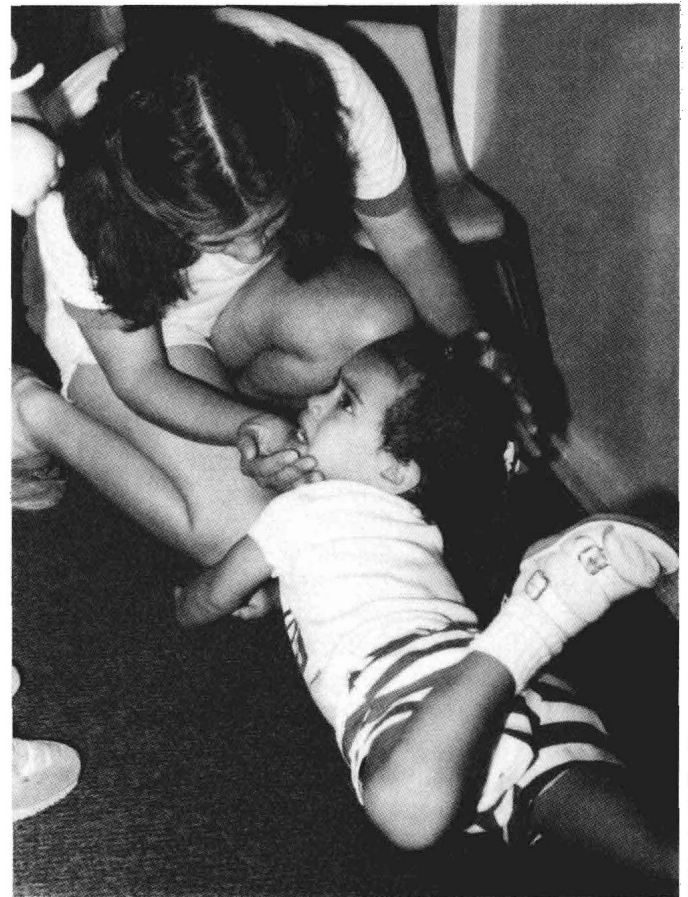
- E. Adults facilitate the development of self-esteem by respecting, accepting, and comforting children, regardless of the child's behavior** (Coopersmith, 1975; Gordon, 1970, 1975; Greenspan & Greenspan, 1985; Kobak, 1979; Kuczynski, 1983; Lickona, 1983; Moore, 1982; Mussen & Eisenberg-Bert, 1977; Riley, 1984; Rubin & Everett, 1982; Smith & Davis, 1976; Stone, 1978).

Understanding behavior that is not unusual for young children, such as messiness, interest in body parts and genital differences, crying and resistance, aggression, and later infraction of rules and truth, is the basis for appropriate guidance of young children. Developmentally appropriate guidance demonstrates respect for children. It helps them understand and grow, and is directed toward helping children develop self-control and the ability to make better decisions in the future.

Adult behaviors that are *never* acceptable toward children include: screaming in anger; neglect; inflicting physical or emotional pain; criticism of a child's person or family by ridiculing, blaming, teasing, insulting, name-calling, threatening, or using frightening or humiliating punishment. Adults should not laugh at children's behavior, nor discuss it among themselves in the presence of children.

- F. Adults facilitate the development of self-control in children** (Asher, Renshaw, & Hymel, 1982; Hoffman, 1975; Honig, 1985; Kopp, 1982; Lytton, 1979; Miller, 1984; Moore, 1982; Read, Gardner, & Mahler, 1986; Rogers & Ross, 1986; Schaffer, 1984; Stone, 1978; Wolfgang & Glickman, 1980; Yarrow, Scott, & Waxler, 1973; Yarrow & Waxler, 1976).

Children learn self-control when adults treat



Subjects & Predicates

Developmentally appropriate guidance demonstrates respect for children. It helps them understand and grow and is directed toward helping children develop self-control and the ability to make better decisions in the future.

them with dignity and use discipline techniques such as

1. guiding children by setting clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior; or in the case of older children, helping them to set their own limits;
2. valuing mistakes as learning opportunities;
3. redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity;
4. listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations;
5. guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help children to solve their own problems; and
6. patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed.

G. Adults are responsible for all children under their supervision at all times and plan for increasing independence as children acquire skills (Stewart, 1982; Veach, 1977).

Adults must constantly and closely supervise and attend every child younger than the age of 3. They must be close enough to touch infants when awake, catch a climbing toddler before she hits the ground, be aware of every move of a 2-year-old, and be close enough to offer another toy when 2-year-olds have difficulty sharing. Adults must be responsible for 3- to 5-year-old children at all times, in an environment sufficiently open to permit it. Children older than 5 may be deemed, on individual bases, mature enough to leave the classroom or run independent errands within a building. This should happen only with the adult's permission and specific knowledge.

Children in all early childhood settings must be protected from unauthorized (by the guardian/family) adults and older children. Parents should be welcome visitors in the program, but provisions should be made for limited access to buildings, careful and close supervision of outdoor play areas, and policies which demand that visiting adults check with the administrative office before entering the children's areas. Constant adult vigilance is required with children birth through age 8 years. Young children should not be given the burden of protecting themselves from adults.

III. Relations Between the Home and Program

To achieve individually appropriate programs for young children, early childhood teachers must work in partnership with families and communicate regularly with children's parents.

A. Parents have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their children's care and education. Parents should be encouraged to observe and participate. Teachers are responsible for establishing and maintaining frequent contacts with families (Brazelton, 1984; Croft, 1979; Dittmann, 1984; Honig, 1982; Katz, 1980; Lightfoot, 1978; Moore, 1982; Weissbourd, 1981).

During early childhood, children are largely dependent on their families for identity, secu-

rity, care, and a general sense of well-being. Communication between families and teachers helps build mutual understanding and guidance, and provides greater consistency for children. Joint planning between families and teachers facilitates major socialization processes, such as toilet learning, developing peer relationships, and entering school.

B. Teachers share child development knowledge, insights, and resources as part of regular communication and conferences with family members (Brazelton, 1984; Croft, 1979; Dittmann, 1984; Lightfoot, 1978).

Mutual sharing of information and insights about the individual child's needs and developmental strides help both the family and the program. Regular communication and understanding about child development form a basis for mutual problem solving about concerns regarding behavior and growth. Teachers seek information from parents about individual children. Teachers promote mutual respect by recognizing and acknowledging different points of view to help minimize confusion for children.

C. Teachers, parents, agencies, programs, and consultants who may have educational responsibility for the child at different times should, with family participation, share developmental information about children as they pass from one level or program to another (Lightfoot, 1978; Meisels, 1985; Read, Gardner, & Mahler, 1986; Ziegler, 1985).

Continuity of educational experience is critical to supporting development. Such continuity results from communication both horizontally, as children change programs within a given year, and vertically, as children move on to other settings.

IV. Developmental Evaluation of Children

Assessment of individual children's development and learning is essential for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate programs, but should be used with caution to prevent discrimination against individuals and to ensure accuracy. Accurate testing can only be achieved with reliable, valid instruments and such instruments developed for use with young children are ex-