

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Workshop for Early Childhood Educators

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Introductions



- Turn to the person next to you and interview them. Find out:

- their name
- what class they teach
- their expectations of this workshop

Introduce the person you interviewed to the whole group.

Workshop Objectives

In this workshop, participants will:

- understand the notion of 'developmentally appropriate practice'
- consider the nature of children's development at different ages in early childhood
- be familiarized with principles of child development and learning that inform developmentally appropriate practice
- be familiarized with guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice
- theoretically apply notions of developmentally appropriate practice to aspects of teaching practice
- consider some of the limitations of the notion of 'developmentally appropriate practice'
- consider and plan for ways to practically apply notions of developmentally appropriate practice to aspects of their own teaching practice

Scenarios: Small Group Discussion



- You are a teacher for a Standard 1 class. Based on the information given to your group in your scenario, plan a social studies lesson for your class on the topic of ‘families’.
- In addition, answer the following questions:
 - What factors do you consider as you plan your lesson content and teaching methodologies? Why are these factors important?
 - Would you plan your lesson any differently if... ? Explain.

Scenario #1:



- You are a teacher for a Standard 1 class. The students in your classroom come from various backgrounds and exhibit a range of personality characteristics and learning styles.
- Most of the students in your classroom are *6-7 years of age*, although you have a few students who are *5 years old*.

Scenario #2:



- You are a teacher for Standard 1 class, with most of your students being 6-7 years of age and coming from various backgrounds.
- The students in your classroom exhibit *a range of personality characteristics and learning styles*, including the following:
 - A student who is shy verbally but demonstrates a strong mind when she writes.
 - A very energetic student who doesn't like sitting for long periods.
 - A student who is very bright verbally but has difficulty with reading and writing.
 - A student who has difficulty with traditional academic subjects but is very creative and artistic.

Scenario #3:



- You are a teacher for Class 1, with most of your students being 6-7 years of age and exhibiting a range of personality characteristics and learning styles.
- The students in your classroom come from *various backgrounds*, including the following:
 - A student whose family recently moved here from their village, where they had a strong extended family support system.
 - A student from a family with a traditional and patriarchal nuclear set-up.
 - A student from a single parent (mother) home.
 - A student from a large extended family where multiple family units form part of the same home and family, with the grandmother of the family as the head.



Some factors to consider...

- age (capabilities, experiences)
- personality characteristics and learning styles
- social and cultural contexts

What is Developmentally Appropriate Practice?

Professionals making decisions about the well-being and education of children based on at least three important kinds of information or knowledge:

- What is known about *child development and learning*
- What is known about the strengths, interests, and needs of *each individual child* in the group
- Knowledge of the *social and cultural contexts* in which children live

Child Development & Learning: Small Group Work



- Form small groups according to the ages of the children you teach.
- Describe the development and learning of an average child of that age. Note in particular:
 - What children do at that age
 - What children need at that age


A Developmental Approach...

- “In a developmental approach to curriculum design, ... [decisions] about what should be learned and how it would best be learned depend on what we know of the learner’s developmental status and our understanding of the relationships between early experience and subsequent development.” (Katz, 1995, p. 109).

Principles of Child Development & Learning


- *Principles*: generalizations that are sufficiently reliable that they should be taken into account when making decisions (Katz, 1995)
- Based on a review of the research literature, the NAEYC has developed a list of empirically based principles of child development and learning that inform and guide decisions about developmentally appropriate practice.

Twelve Principles of Child Development & Learning




1. Domains of children's development—physical, social, emotional, and cognitive—are closely related. Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains.
2. Development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired.

Twelve Principles of Child Development & Learning




3. Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child's functioning.
4. Early experiences have both cumulative and delayed effects on individual children's development. Optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning.

Twelve Principles of Child Development & Learning




5. Development proceeds in predictable directions toward greater complexity, organization, and internalization.
6. Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.

Twelve Principles of Child Development & Learning



7. Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them.
8. Development and learning result from interaction of biological maturation and the environment, which includes both the physical and social worlds that children live in.

Twelve Principles of Child Development & Learning



9. Play is an important vehicle for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development.
10. Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery.

Twelve Principles of Child Development & Learning



11. Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know.
12. Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically secure.



Early Childhood Teacher as Decision-Maker

- Implications of child development knowledge for: how to teach, what to teach and when, how to assess what children have learned, how to adapt curriculum and instruction to individual children and in light of the social and cultural context.
- Developmentally appropriate practice requires that teachers integrate the many dimensions of their knowledge base.

Guidelines for Decisions about Developmentally Appropriate Practice

1. Creating a caring community of learners
2. Teaching to enhance development and learning
3. Constructing appropriate curriculum
4. Assessing children's learning and development
5. Establishing reciprocal relationships with families



Creating a caring community of learners

- A context that supports the development of relationships
 - Social construction of knowledge
 - Caring, inclusive community
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- A. Early childhood setting as a community of learners
 - B. Consistent, positive relationships with a limited number of adults and other children
 - C. Social relationships
 - D. Design of learning environment and programme
 - E. Organization and order

Teaching to enhance development & learning

- Adults' responsibility
 - Children as active constructors of knowledge
 - Balance between child's self-initiated learning and adult guidance and support
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- A. Respect, value, accept, and treat with dignity each child
 - B. Know each child well
 - C. Provide an intellectually engaging, responsive environment
 - D. Enable children to attain key curriculum goals across various disciplines
 - E. Foster collaboration with peers
 - F. Use a wide range of teaching strategies
 - G. Facilitate the development of responsibility and self-regulation in each child

Constructing appropriate curriculum

- Decisions about curriculum content take into consideration the age and experience of the learners
- A. All areas of a child's development
- B. Broad range of meaningful content across disciplines
- C. Build on child's prior knowledge and skills
- D. Integrate across disciplines
- E. Promote development of knowledge, understanding, processes, skills, and dispositions
- F. Intellectual integrity, accessible and achievable, direct participation of children
- G. Supports home culture/language and shared culture of programme
- H. Realistic and attainable goals for children at that age

Assessing children's learning & development

- Assessment and curriculum are integrated
 - A. Ongoing, strategic, purposeful; to benefit children
 - B. Reflects progress toward learning and developmental goals
 - C. Methods are appropriate to age and experiences
 - D. Used only for set purpose
 - E. Major decisions never made on basis of single assessment
 - F. Identify and support children who have special learning/developmental needs
 - G. Recognize and allow for individual variation
 - H. What children can do independently and also what they can do with assistance from others

Establishing reciprocal relationships with families

- Knowledge of individual children and their context is acquired through relationships with children's families
 - Relationship has to be more than parent education or parent-teacher associations
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- A. Mutual respect, cooperation, shared responsibility, negotiation of conflicts towards achievement of shared goals
 - B. Collaborative partnerships; regular two-way communication
 - C. Parents participate in decision-making
 - D. Teachers acknowledge parents' choices and goals for children (without abdicating professional responsibility)
 - E. Teachers and parents share their knowledge of the child's development and learning
 - F. Families involved in assessment and planning
 - G. Program links families with a range of services as needed
 - H. Developmental information about the child shared as s/he passes from one level/programme to another

Implications: Small Group Work



- Take the topic you are assigned and discuss the following questions.
 - What the implications of the Principles and the Guidelines for this aspect of early childhood education?
 - What are some of the challenges or limitations of the Principles and the Guidelines? Are there times when they might be inappropriate?
- Prepare a list of 'tips' for your colleagues. These lists will be consolidated and distributed to all participants after the workshop.

Topics



- Curriculum and teaching methodologies
- Personal and social interactions
- Learning environment and resources
- Daily schedule
- Assessment
- Programme/school administration

Developing Action Plans: Individual Work



- Based on the knowledge you have shared with each other today, develop an individual action plan on ways you would like to implement aspects of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in your teaching practice.

Concluding Thoughts...



- Early childhood teacher as decision-maker
- Final questions, comments, thoughts?
- Feedback form