SCRIPT
Teaching with a Purpose: Developmentally Appropriate Practice
Dr. Maggie McGuire

Welcome

Welcome to Collaborative for Children’s Online Child Care Provider Training Program, hosted by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. “Teaching with a Purpose: Developmentally Appropriate Practice” is a course designed to help you learn more about professional practice, methods, and curriculum in preschool settings. In addition to providing you with an overview of the topic, this course will offer some practical tips on how to best support children in the classroom.

This course will be presented in a voice-narrated format that allows you to follow along with the PowerPoint slide presentation. A high-speed internet connection is required to complete this course. Content for this course is divided into multiple sections (see menu bar on left for course outline), enabling you to complete and/or review content at your own pace.

In the next section, you will be directed to complete a brief, multiple-choice pre-learning assessment. Once you have completed the pre-learning assessment, you will be free to advance to the course content, including printable handouts and the course script, by clicking on the “Next Section” button at the bottom of the page. At the conclusion of the course, you will be directed to complete a post-learning assessment that will determine if you successfully pass the course.

If, at anytime, you wish to take a break from the course, simply log out and return to the course when you are ready to continue. When you sign back in to the course, you will be taken directly to the section where you left off. To review a section you have already completed, click on the desired section on the left menu bar.

Slide # 1 Introduction

Welcome to Collaborative for Children’s Online Child Care Provider Training Program, hosted by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. “Teaching with a Purpose: Developmentally Appropriate Practice” is a course designed to help you learn more about professional practice, methods, and curriculum in preschool settings. In addition to providing you with an overview of the topic, this course will offer some practical tips on how to best support children in the classroom.

Slide # 2 Learning Objectives

Let’s take a few moments to go over the objectives for this course. By the time you have completed this course, you will be able to:

• Understand the meaning of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP),
• Understand what it means to be an intentional teacher,
• Examine how teachers make decisions about DAP,
• Explore the role of the early childhood teacher, and
• Examine the research on DAP.
**Slide # 3 Developmentally Appropriate Practice Defined**

The concept of what Developmentally Appropriate Practice means is the basic building block upon which high quality early childhood programs and classrooms are based (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) as:

- Meeting children where they are,
- Helping children reach challenging and achievable goals,
- Teaching practices appropriate to the age and developmental status of the child, and
- Making decisions based on the knowledge of best practices.

DAP is based on the clear knowledge and research of how children learn and develop.


**Slide # 4 Principles of Developmentally Appropriate Practice**

Think about how you make decisions about what is best for your own personal children. You consider their age, level of maturity, what they like to do, and what is acceptable behavior or activities in your family. These are the same ideas that guide Developmentally Appropriate Practice, the difference being how you, the professional, apply them. You have to consider:

- What teachers know about child development and how children develop and learn,
- What teachers know about the individual children in their care, and
- The social and cultural context in which children live and learn.

Using this information will enable you to make decisions that are more in line with the concept of developmentally appropriate practice.

**Slide # 5 Developmentally Appropriate Practice**

Dr. Haim Ginott once stated, “Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression.”

As a professional, you have the power to help a child grow to their greatest potential or not. Your understanding of children and their developmental needs is what makes the difference. Having a philosophy based on a clear understanding of the development of children, the knowledge that children develop at their own pace and bring a variety of needs and wants to the educational setting is critical for understanding Developmentally Appropriate Practice.

These three concepts are critical to this understanding:

- Developmentally Appropriate Practice is a philosophy, not a method,
- Children have their own timetables of growth and development, and
- Children bring their own special interests, life experiences, and strengths and needs to school.
As stated previously, Developmentally Appropriate Practice is a philosophy or way of thinking. It is based on your understanding of how children learn. We understand that children learn:

- Through active exploration
- Through sensory experiences
- Through repetition
- Within meaningful contexts
- Through trial and error and problem solving
- From elaboration of experiences, as opposed to acceleration
- Through interaction with warm, caring, responsive adults
- In response to a warm, stimulating environment
- With sound nutrition and sufficient rest, and
- By following the same course of development, each at his or her own pace.

But what does this look like in your classroom? Children are not just sitting waiting for you to tell them what to do. Children are involved in working through problems, making guesses, trying them out and adjusting their thinking. They are making messes (and cleaning them up) and sometimes trying things out, over and over again. They are making choices and gathering information about what is good or not so good through their actions. They are working in an environment that has been especially designed for them based on their developmental and interest needs, with special adherence to safety standards based on their age and developmental level. In short, they are in control of what they are learning because you, as the professional, understand how children learn and have prepared the environment to provide for those needs. You have allowed for large blocks of time for children to actively explore concepts of interest, plus you have organized the day so there are both quiet and active times with breaks for appropriate snacks, meals, and rest time. You understand that each child is an individual and provide an appropriate environment for children to grow at their own pace.

In the following video, *Play as Data*, let’s look at two boys and their teacher as the boys try out their theories at the water table. As you watch, consider how the above principles of developmentally appropriate practice are applied.

**Slide # 7 Intentional Teaching**

Take a few minutes and reflect on what type of teacher you are? Are you a “fly by the seat of your pants” teacher who plans for her classroom based on what kind of worksheets or cute art activities they have found? Do you think about who you are preparing your classroom for, their ages, developmental level or interests? A *purposeful* teacher is one who deliberately plans for the specific children in their class. She considers their ages, where they are developmentally and what they are interested in. She plans, understanding how her children learn, developing activities that are *meaningful* and have something to teach. Children are engaged in activities that have value and meaning to the child. She is thoughtful in how the *setting* supports and impacts the activity, so that the best learning can take place. Finally, she has a variety of *strategies to support* the learning that she has planned. She thinks through the activity, looking for areas that might need to be adjusted, and plans for the unexpected.

**Slide # 8 Characteristics of Good Intentional Teaching**

It has been found that by setting *high*, but realistic expectations, people and children alike will usually respond with their best effort. (Parker, n.d.) The key word for this concept is realistic. Expectations must be realistic to the age and developmental level of the child or children in the classroom. This requires the teacher to have a firm understanding of child development and what is developmentally appropriate for her age group. By
planning and using appropriate classroom management techniques, the intentional teacher will organize her environment into a learning-center classroom with engaging activities that will challenge and stimulate her students. The intentional teacher builds in time during the day for thoughtful questioning by the children of what they have accomplished and learned. This chance to think and talk about what they have learned provides children the opportunity to be reflective learners, who have ownership in what they learn rather than dashing from one activity to another with little meaning. This also give the teacher and the children the opportunity to provide feedback to each other about what they have experienced and learned that day.

Watch the video, Coloring Water. How does the activity reflect the teacher’s planning and questioning technique? What type of feedback do the children give the teacher, and vice versa?


Slide # 9 Intentional Teaching Strategies

Switching from being the one who is always “telling” can be difficult. It is certainly easier and quicker to just tell someone what to do, or what he or she needs to know. However, that is not intentional teaching. Intentional teachers acknowledge what children know, and help them build new knowledge. They coach children by taking them from where they are in their knowledge, and help them link the old knowledge with the new. They use strategies, such as open-ended questioning (Why do you think that happened? What will happen next?) and demonstrations (Let’s try it) to extend knowledge. They provide the support and additional information for children to form new concepts based on what they know.

Slide # 10 Deciding What is Developmentally Appropriate

Intentional teachers ask themselves three questions when planning for children:

- What is age appropriate for the children in my class?
- What is appropriate for each individual child in my class? and
- What is appropriate in terms of the social and cultural context of the children in my class?

Considering the answers to these questions will guide how the teacher will decide what is developmentally appropriate.

Slide # 11 Understanding the Role of the Teacher

To better understand the role of a teacher, consider from a teacher’s viewpoint how you would do the following:

- Create a caring community of learners
- Teach to enhance learning and development
- Plan curriculum to achieve important goals
- Assess children’s learning and development
- Establish reciprocal relationships with families

Is one more important than the other, or are they all necessary to be an intentional teacher? In the next four slides we will examine each concept more in-depth.
Slide # 12 Creating a Caring Community of Learners

When looking over these concepts, try to:

- Get to know the child’s personality, abilities, and ways of learning,
- Support the child in developing relationships with others and feeling part of the group,
- Build a strong sense of group identity,
- Create an organized, orderly, and comfy environment,
- Plan for ways for children to work together cooperatively,
- Bring children’s culture and language into the classroom,
- Ensure children’s health and safety,
- Have an inclusive classroom,
- Have an “explorable” classroom,
- Take into account evolving learning needs, and
- Carefully plan days.

Is there any one that you would not consider important if your own personal child was in this classroom? We all want our children’s teachers to know them as an individual, understanding their little quirks and mannerisms. We feel more in control and comfortable in an environment that is organized, orderly, and pleasant to be in. Being surrounded by our creature comforts and familiar surroundings helps us feel accepted and valued, and so it is with children.

A thoughtfully prepared environment plays a huge role in making children feel comfortable, invited, and safe, through how the furniture is arranged, and what is displayed on the wall and at their eye level. Are there cozy areas where children can gather and work together? Is it kid friendly where children can explore and interact with the minimum interference from adults? Does the teacher encourage cooperation amongst the children and model how to interact appropriately? Is it a caring environment where children are valued for who they are, and it is evident that they are part of a larger whole? These are all concepts that need to be incorporated in a caring classroom.

Slide # 13 Guidance in a Community of Learners Classroom

Listen to the voices in a classroom. Is the classroom dominated by the teacher or children, or a combination? By listening to what is being said and the tone that is being used, you can learn a lot about the guidance method of the teacher in the classroom.

Let’s be honest, have you ever made a mistake? Do you remember how the error was handled? Was the result a positive or negative experience? Did you learn strategies on how not to make the mistake again, or were you made to feel bad or ashamed? The fact that you still remember how you felt clearly shows the impact it made on you.

Research shows that children rarely make mistakes deliberately (Costley, 2010); mistakes are made because of the lack of information, or thinking errors. Yet, adults think children understand their actions just because they should. We forget that children are egocentric and impulsive, and do not always stop to think about what they are doing or how it will affect others. They live in “now and me” time. An intentional teacher, who has clearly adopted the developmentally appropriate practice philosophy, understands this concept and is prepared to help the child by listening to them and guiding their feelings and frustrations into a more realistic viewpoint. This teacher will:

- Value mistakes as learning opportunities,
- Listen to children when they talk about feelings and frustrations,
- Guide children through conflict resolution,
- Model conflict resolution and problem solving skills, and
- Remind children of rules and the rationale behind them.

In this classroom, the children and teacher will work together to solve problems rather than having one person dictate what is right or wrong.

Costley, K.C. (2010). Perspectives of Young Children: How Do They Really Think?

**Slide # 14 Teaching to Enhance Learning and Development**

This slide provides you with strategies that you could use to help children in their learning and development.

- **Acknowledge** what the child is doing, whether right or wrong.
- **Encourage** them as they begin to solve their own problems and guide them as needed.
- Give **specific feedback** about what they are doing right or wrong. Be careful of using the word “like” as in “I like how Joe is sitting.” This implies that your opinion is most important. Joe should be doing what is expected, so a more appropriate feedback would be: “I see that Joe knows exactly how we safely sit at circle time.”
- **Model** the type of behavior or interactions you expect from the children.
- **Demonstrate** what you want the children to do or say. Be careful of falling in the trap of “Do as I say, not as I do.” This sends mixed messages to children, and they become confused.
- **Create or add challenge** for children, so they can grow and apply new knowledge.
- Give a **clue, hint or other assistance**; remember how it feels to need help.
- **Provide information** when it is needed, and
- **Try Scaffolding**, to help everyone understand a concept better.

In the following video, “Learning to Talk about Goals and Strategies,” look for the various ways the teacher models, demonstrates, and challenges the children. Can you identify other strategies that are used?

**Slide # 15 Using Different Learning Formats**

A teacher with a clearly understood DAP philosophy understands there is more than one way to provide instruction in a classroom. When planning instruction, it is the teacher’s responsibility to think about the best way to deliver the instruction. Some topics are best presented in a large group setting with everyone gathered around, while for other topics, small groups of children might be the best choice. There are positives and negatives for both types of grouping, and only you – the professional, can decide what works best in your classroom, based on what you are presenting, the learning needs of your students, and the activity involved.

An additional format for classroom instruction is **learning centers**. The purpose of a learning center is to provide children with the opportunity to actively engage in play on their own developmental level. The effective center is designed to relate to life and where children can try out new ideas, rearrange events, or take on new roles. Centers also give children the opportunity to practice new knowledge until they are comfortable and have internalized it. Having this opportunity to use information over and over again, helps children fit it into their old knowledge and make it part of their new understanding. Effective centers support what the children have already been introduced to, and what they have some understanding of. It helps them build their knowledge (Isbell, 1995).

**Individual time** should also be available in a classroom. It can be used as a time to enhance instruction, or work with someone who needs more time. It is also effective for some types of learners who are more comfortable working alone. It should never be used as a punishment for someone unable to work in a group.
In this short video, “Hamilton’s Towing,” you will see children actively engaged in dramatic play. What types of materials are available and how do they extend the play?


**Slide # 16 How People Learn**

What do you think about this statement? What is your experience? Where would your classroom fall on this chart? Active engagement by anyone will lead to more learning, and the ability to remember and use the new information.

**Slide # 17 Appropriate Practices 0 - 17 Months**

When working with young infants, a consistent, calm, caring attitude and environment will help keep everyone happy. A basic key to happiness is to feel that you are safe, and that your needs are going to be met. Abraham Maslow developed his Hierarchy of Needs (1943) based on this theory, and it has continuously been held to be true. Basic survival needs must be addressed before any type of learning takes place. Think about yourself. While at the movies, if you are cold or hungry, then are you really paying attention to the movie? Probably not.

In working with young infants, the following guidelines are developmentally appropriate:

- Nurture infants to allow them to feel that they are in a safe, interesting, and orderly environment,
- Keep a consistent routine of diapering, dressing, and eating,
- Respond to children’s nonverbal and verbal cues,
- Keep a well organized environment with toys and materials that challenge children to succeed and provide a variety of sensory stimulation, and
- Talk, sing, and dance with infants. Use every opportunity for learning and engaging with them.

Children of this age are said to be in the Sensory Motor Stage of Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development.


**Slide # 18 Appropriate Practices 18 Months to 3 Years**

What an exciting time it can be for young children from 18-months to 3-years! It can also be an unsettling time, as children take a more active role in their world, but lack the judgment to do so safely. A toddler teacher has many things that must be considered in order for children to explore, interact, and actively engage in their environment. Toddlers spend much of their day deciding what they want to do. It is a time of big decisions for them as they learn how to interact in their world and control themselves. It can also be scary, overwhelming and intense as they learn within their limited experience. For example, have you ever asked a toddler if they would like a cookie and they say “no,” then turn right around and start crying because you did not give it to them? Life can be very overwhelming for toddlers.

Toddler teachers need to ensure that the following practices are implemented in their classrooms:

- Time schedules are flexible & smooth, dictated by children’s needs
- Adults are respectful of children’s developing preferences for familiar objects, foods, and people.
- Adults are frequently reading, singing, or doing finger plays, or acting out simple stories with children participating actively
- Toddlers are given appropriate art materials
- Toddlers are encouraged to explore the materials & are not expected to produce a finished art product, and
- Children are given daily opportunities for exploratory activities.

Teachers who clearly understand the philosophy of Developmentally Appropriate Practice understand and work with toddlers to help them begin self-regulation, while addressing their immediate needs. Playtime for a toddler is their major job each day. Toddlers need these daily opportunities to help lay the groundwork for future learning.


Slide # 19 Appropriate Practices 3 - 5 Years

In the not too distant past, the preschool years meant exactly that – the time before children begin formal schooling. In today’s educational environment, preschool means putting 3 to 5-year-old children in a formalized educational setting. Depending on how that educational environment is structured, it can have a huge impact on whether the child is successful or stressed beyond their age.

Teachers, administrators, and anyone else involved with the education of 3 to 5-year-olds must carefully consider if their expectations are appropriate for the children’s age. A child’s needs are unique to their age, and they are not just short first graders who can handle the same curriculum and expectations. They have very specific needs based on their cognitive and social/emotional needs. Ideal considerations would be making sure that:

- Developmentally appropriate materials are available for manipulation, including blocks and construction items, dramatic play props, sand and water, art & modeling materials, and tools for simple discovery activities,
- Opportunities are available for children to plan and select many of their own activities,
- Teachers encourage children to describe their products or ideas using open-ended questions, and that
- Learning activities are developed based on the children’s curiosity about their world.

Toddlers and preschoolers are considered to be in the Preoperational Stage of Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development.


Slide # 20 Appropriate Practices 6 - 8 Years

The primary years are a special time for children. They are able to talk and share what they know on a much more complex level than ever before. They need a teacher who is a guide for learning, and who understands how to ask thought provoking questions, rather than telling information. Children of this age are independent, and like the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and explain how they got there. Strategies to consider for this group are to plan for:

- A variety of active, engaging strategies; including asking thought-provoking questions which add complexity to tasks and encourages reciprocal discussion
- Children and teachers to work together to select projects.
- Times when children are encouraged to work together to problem solve, share their own perspectives,
and listen to the views of others

- Many opportunities for children to engage in discussion and representation activities (such as writing, drawing, or constructing models) to help children refine their own concepts and thinking
- Daily opportunities/activities that encourage children to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and talking with each other

Primary-aged children are concrete thinkers, (Piaget) and need opportunities to explore and test new ideas and concepts. This becomes a critical time as children begin to internalize what they know. While true abstract thinking does not officially begin until they are older, primary-aged children are building the necessary framework in their minds to move into the highest level of thinking. However, a developmentally appropriate primary classroom should have its emphasis on hands-on learning, with a large emphasis on active learning.


Slide # 21 A Developmentally Appropriate Learning Environment Includes…

What is nice about a Developmentally Appropriate learning environment is that many of the characteristics are the same, regardless of the age of the children using the space. Think about the physical space, daily schedule and routines, and emotional atmosphere in your classroom. Then, consider how these aspects of the learning environment might be similar or different if you cared for children in a different age group.

A developmentally appropriate learning environment:

- Effectively helps children develop independence and confidence,
- Provides a safe and healthy indoor and outdoor environment,
- Organizes the space in interest areas or centers,
- Supplies plenty of supplies and materials that are diverse, and
- Displays student work or work that is of interest to the student.

Did you find that all of these apply, and look slightly different based on the age of the children involved?

Slide # 22 Designing an Effective Learning Environment

The teacher must consider many different ideas when designing a classroom. Every decision that is made is based on the philosophy of developmentally appropriate practice and the age group they will be working with. Consider the following when designing an effective learning environment:

- What is your knowledge of child development and children’s individual interests and needs?
- What content is appropriate, and how will the environment reflect that content?
- What is the teacher’s role in planning and participating in the environment?
- How can I involve families? and
- What messages do I want the environment to reflect?

How would these concepts look in your classroom?
Slide # 23 Arrangement of the environment

When you are considering how to arrange your classroom so that the needs of your children are addressed, there are some simple ideas you should consider. You should:

- Display and store materials within children’s reach,
- Offer space where children can explore, be messy, and move their bodies, and
- Display interesting pictures or objects within reach, and invite children to explore them.

Depending on the age and developmental level of the children using a classroom, each classroom will look slightly different. In a young infant’s room, materials will either be on the floor, or on the lowest shelf in the classroom. Equipment needs to be available for them to pull up on. There will be large open areas of rugs/carpets for the children to move around, and objects will be hung from the ceiling on long hangers that can be easily reached from the floor or high chair.

In a toddler room, materials will be on the bottom two shelves, and pillows and soft climbing structures will be added to the rugs/carpeted areas. Several areas will be established for centers or interest areas with large, open spaces so children can play side by side. Shelves will be added with materials displayed within easy reach.

In the preschool classroom, additional centers or interest areas will be added and cozy areas established where children can go to work with a friend or on an individual activity. Special areas will be established for messy activities, such as art or sand and water. A large open area will be kept for group gatherings.

The primary room will have many areas designated as centers, and a large area for blocks and construction activities. The centers will be arranged based on noise and messiness. Blocks will be away from the library area. Art and sand and water will be close to a sink, and hopefully on a tile floor.

Slide # 24 Establishing Center/Interest Areas

Before adding centers or interest areas to your classroom, a few simple ideas should be considered:

- Centers or interest areas provide children with an ideal setting for preschool children who want to explore, make things, experiment, and discover.
- They accommodate a few children at a time, and address children’s need for small group time while supporting social development.
- In a well-defined space, children are able to concentrate, which can lead to more complex play.
- Effective planning includes ongoing assessment of learning environments, including center or interest areas.

The added bonus of establishing center or interest areas is that your classroom will be better organized, and will allow the children to become more independent as they choose various areas to explore with materials especially selected to help stimulate play. As the teacher, you will provide materials in one spot that have been selected to provide for the range of developmental levels for the children in your care.

Slide # 25 Designing Your Center/Interest Areas

Having centers or interest areas in your classroom requires some careful planning on the part of the teacher. It might be helpful to start with a sketch of the room including: windows, doors, electrical outlets, sinks, bathrooms, and any type of non-moveable structures, such as poles and sliding room dividers or furniture, like cubbies and tables. After you make a sketch, begin to make a list of the centers that you might like to have.
Ideas for what kind of centers or learning areas you might have will be based on the ages, developmental levels, and interests of the children in your class. Key questions to ask yourself are:

- Where should the center or interest areas be placed?
- How much space is needed so that children are not crowded? and
- How many center or interest areas should I have?

Just as in real estate: location, location, location is critical. Quiet centers should be placed with quiet centers. Loud or noisy centers should be carefully placed so as not to interfere with the centers around them. Messy centers need to be placed near the sink or a water source. If your center requires electricity, be sure to place it near an electrical outlet, so that an extension cord does not have to be used.

A good rule of thumb for space requirements is: the younger the child, the more space needed for the center or interest area. Younger children need more space to move around as they play alone or next to someone. As children get older and begin to interact with each other, the space does not need to be as large. Younger children need just a few choices of centers or interest areas, as they are easily overwhelmed by too many choices. However, because older children enjoy variety and choice, more centers or interest areas can be available.

**Slide # 26 Offer a Variety of Materials**

Just as with choosing how many centers should be in your classroom, choosing materials is also important. Again, a good rule of thumb is to consider the age and developmental level of the children in the classroom.

Consider the following:

- Open-ended materials such as blocks, art materials, dress-up, sand, water, prop boxes, flour, and corn meal,
- Home-made toys or activities such as shakers and pictures for picture files,
- Cooking experiences for preschoolers,
- Uncluttered shelves for storing materials,
- Low shelving units to display materials so that children can access materials by themselves, and
- Sensory exploration such as water.

When working with infants and toddlers, it is more important to have multiples of each toy than is to have a large variety of toys. Large varieties of materials tend to overwhelm young infants and toddlers. Also, sharing becomes an issue, so having more than one copy of popular toys allows multiple children access.

**Slide # 27 Offer Creative Art Experiences**

Daily creative art experiences are important in a developmentally appropriate classroom. It can take many forms, such as finger or easel painting, collage, beading, or play-doh. The most important concept to keep in mind is that the process of creating is more important than the product itself, or what the product looks like in the end. This can be an especially difficult concept to share with parents, as they sometimes do not value what they cannot identify.

**Slide # 28 How to Support Creative Art**

Supporting the creative arts in your classroom can be as simple as:

- Having easels and paint available daily,
- Accepting what children create - resisting the urge to make their work recognizable,
- Eliminating the use of “coloring books and copied coloring sheets,”
- Never altering a child’s work, and
- Talking about texture, color of materials, and the experience.

Sharing this information with parents can also give the added bonus of parental understanding of what they can do at home to support their children’s creativity.

**Slide # 29 Appropriate Daily Scheduling**

Organizing the daily schedule in your classroom should be a top priority. Considering the age and developmental levels and needs of the children in the class will help the class run smoother, and be less stressful to both the children and the teacher. Consider incorporating the following concepts into your daily schedule:

- A consistent, yet flexible daily routine  
  - While young children cannot tell time, they can understand routine. A routine provides children with a feeling of safety, and security to know what is going to happen next.
- A variety of activities  
  - All children like to learn new things, and children all have different learning styles. By providing a variety of activities, children can choose what interests them the most, or take a chance on something that might be a little out of their comfort zone.
- A variety of groupings  
  - Working with new people provides the opportunity for children to understand that there are a wide variety of interesting people who might think differently than themselves. This is a great strategy for teachers to celebrate children’s uniqueness, while demonstrating our commonalities.
- Enough time spent in each type of activity  
  - Large blocks of time are important for in-depth learning to take place. Children need time to try out all the possibilities they can think of in their play for true learning to take place. Short blocks of time can make children feel rushed to complete their work, or cause them to just skim the basics to finish before they run out of time.

The good news about a daily schedule is that it can be adjusted to meet the needs of the children.

**Slide # 30 Interaction with Children**

Remember back to the beginning of this module when you were asked to think about what a teacher’s role was. Now, I would like to encourage you to think about how you interact with children. Consider how the following points could be demonstrated in your classroom:

- How would you meet basic physical needs?
- What would you do to create a warm and caring environment?
- How should you encourage and support language and development?
- How would you encourage initiative?
- In what ways would you introduce information and model skills?
- In which ways would you acknowledge children’s activities and accomplishments?
- How would you support peer interactions? and
- What would you do to encourage independent problem solving?

Has anything changed?

Let’s look at how some of these points are demonstrated in the video, “Clever Mistakes.” Note how the teacher allows the child to understand that she is making deliberate mistakes. How does the teacher change the task when she realizes that it is too easy for the child? What is the child’s reaction?
Slide # 31 What is Curriculum?

Curriculum is the what, or -- the content that children are to learn. It is the written plan that describes the knowledge and skills to be taught, and the learning experience that will take place.

Curriculum is your roadmap for what type of learning will take place in your classroom. A well thought out curriculum will help the classroom be a place of intentional, challenging learning that meets the needs of the children involved.

Slide # 32 Integrated Curriculum

What is an “integrated curriculum?” How does it differ from a regular curriculum? Remember back to when you were in school. The teacher would ask you to get out your math books, and everyone would do their math work. You would then be told to put math away, and get out the language books – and everyone would do language activities. That was how curriculum used to be organized. All topics were taught in isolation, and no one made connections to how you could use language skills during math, or math skills in social studies.

Integrated curriculum is a more effective type of concept. An integrated curriculum takes a topic and applies it to other subjects, such as: math, language arts, social studies, health, etc. In doing so, a topic is viewed from multiple standpoints, and provides for a much deeper understanding.

The positive benefits to using an integrated curriculum approach are:

- In-depth exploration of topics,
- Gives more choices, more motivation, greater satisfaction,
- More active learning,
- Teacher learns too, modeling lifelong learning, and
- More effective use of time.

With an integrated curriculum everything revolves around the topic and the day flows smoothly without being chopped up into individual lessons.


Slide # 33 Making Curriculum Effective

Look for opportunities that:

- Use a curriculum framework when planning, so that the children’s classroom experiences will fit together,
- Consider development, sequence, and pace of learning, and
- Make meaningful connections.

Make the most of your curriculum planning by ensuring all subjects, ages, and developmental needs of your children are considered. Curriculum should never be a “one-size-fits-all” model. Rather, the teacher should provide a careful outline by asking themselves: “How does the curriculum fit the needs of the children in the classroom?”
Slide #34 Assessing Children’s Development and Learning

Woven throughout your curriculum development should be opportunities for assessing what the children know and have learned. Make sure that you provide time to consider how you will:

- Monitor the children’s development and learning,
- Guide your planning and decision making,
- Identify the children who might benefit from special services or supports, and
- Report and communicate with others.

Building in self-reflection time throughout the curriculum cycle will allow for the teacher to adjust her curriculum plan to best meet the needs of the children involved.

Slide # 35 Assessment should be…

Assessment should be…

- Age Appropriate
- Individually Appropriate, and
- Culturally Appropriate.

Watch the video, “Sink or Float Explained.” Watch the teacher assessing the child on her knowledge of why things sink or float. What strategies does the teacher use? How does she encourage the child to share what she knows?

Slide # 36 Developing reciprocal relationships with families

Including parents in the happenings of the classroom is a large part of the philosophy of Developmentally Appropriate Practice. Parents are the children’s first teachers and we are all on the same team. Strategies that might be used for inviting parents are to:

- Make parents feel welcome in the classroom,
- Be open for dialogue,
- Not be all knowing,
- Have two–way communication, and to
- Acknowledge parent’s choices and goals for their children.

Slide # 37 Conclusion

This concludes the informational portion of this course. Please click on the “Next Section” button at the bottom of this page to proceed to the post-test. If you would like to review any of the previous sections, click on the desired title in the left menu bar.
References


Costley, K.C. (2010). Perspectives of Young Children: How Do They Really Think?


