Developmental Activities

How Developmentally Appropriate is My Curriculum?

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What is Developmentally Appropriate Practice?

• Meeting children where they are – which means teachers must get to know them well – and enabling them to reach goals that are challenging and achievable

• Teaching should be appropriate to children’s age and development, attuned to them as unique individuals and responsive to the social and cultural contexts in which they live.
What is DAP? (cont.)

• Developmentally appropriate practice does not mean making things easier for children.
• Rather, it means ensuring that goals and experiences are suited to their learning and development and challenging enough to promote their progress and interest.
What is the Basis for DAP?

Best practice is based on knowledge of how children learn and develop. The research based yields major principles (12) on human development and learning. See the end of this presentation for the twelve principles.
Comprehensive, effective curriculum

• All domains of children’s development and learning interrelate.
• Is based on what is known about the interrelationships and sequences of ideas so that children’s later abilities and understandings are built on what is already known.
• Children’s learning experiences need to be far better integrated particularly between preschool and K-3. e.g., Pre-K could consider more robust content, attention to learning progressions)
How do Domains Interrelate? What is Being Built Upon?
Effective Curriculum

• What the teacher does is paramount
• Child-guided and teacher-guided experiences are vital to development and learning
• Play promotes key abilities for learning.
• Teachers need to provide opportunities for sustained high-level play
• Teachers are intentional in their use of a variety of strategies and approaches (carefully planned curriculum with significant learning in play, routines, interest areas and focused work on a particular topic or concept)
Child-guided and teacher-guided experiences are vital.
Carefully planned curriculum with significant learning everywhere
Teachers need to provide opportunities for sustained high-level play
What are some examples of focused study in my curriculum?
Edgardo

“Mi cada.”
“Yo esto, …
Pointing to color, Green, Paint, Olive) then points to the top of his hand.
“Yo mi … color.”
Objects to provoke wonder, curiosity, and intellectual engagement

Children are intensely fascinated with the physical world and how it works. You can simultaneously honor childhood and promote a love of learning by adding different kinds of engaging discoveries to your environment. This is especially effective when you include things that provide a sense of mystery and wonder so that children become curious about how they work, where they come from, and what can be learned by manipulating them.

Examples include things that play with light and its relationship to color, or things that reflect, sparkle, spin, make sounds, and move. You can use natural light, air, projectors, and other simple technology to build these features into your environment. Create nooks where you can place intriguing objects to keep those brain pathways growing and expanding.
Consider the natural elements of your own early childhood environment with these questions.

• What natural materials are found in your community, yet missing in your program?
• What natural materials uncommon to your area could you include?
• What seasonal traditions or rituals could help children become more closely connected to Mother Nature and the life cycle?
Sustained High-Level Play

• What do I do to provide these experiences?
Platforms, pulleys, fabric and lights add layers of complexity to entice builders.
Provide writing props throughout the environment
Are My Materials Open Ended and Flexible?
Open-ended materials allow children to be creators, rather than consumers of their learning. Careful and attractive displays help them to see the possibilities for the materials.
Flexible space and open-ended materials

Children come to our programs with active bodies as well as active imaginations. Creating multilevel spaces inside, as well as on the playground, gives children different ways to explore spatial relationships with their bodies. Modular furniture that can be turned and stacked in different ways will provide more flexibility than furniture that is designed for a single use.

Offering open-ended materials in a variety of areas will spark children’s imaginations and speak to their desire to continually rearrange and combine materials for exploration and inventions.
Open-ended materials in the drama area offer more for dramatic play beyond the typical housekeeping roles.
Consider the flexible space and open-ended elements of your own early childhood environment with these questions.

- What message does this environment give children about how they should use their bodies?
- Are the indoor and outdoor areas flexible so they can be transformed for a variety of uses?
- Where are there opportunities for individual children to get away from it all and relax?
- How can we create more opportunities for undertakings among a pair or small group of children?
- Do we have a useful balance of open-ended materials and single purpose ones indoors and outdoors?
Open shelving in the corner of a room can create a flexible separate space for small group work.
How Does My Environment Show Family Connections?
Provide mail boxes for each child and family
A simple strategy for creating a welcoming feeling in your program is to have framed photos of the children and their families all around the rooms. Children can carry them around and use them throughout the day.
A Book About Our Families
To help the children and families learn more about the staff, this program gives each staff member her/his own shelf to display photos and special objects from their lives.
Consider the cozy and homelike elements of your own early childhood environment with these questions.

• Where in this space can one learn more about others and build relationships with them?
• Are there a number of soft elements in your physical space through the use of light, color, and seating options?
• What contributions can you invite from families that add their interests and values to your environment?
Summary - Guidelines for DAP

Create a caring community of learners

Enhance development and learning

Plan curriculum to achieve important goals

Assess development and learning

Establish reciprocal relations with families
Consider the Key Elements You Have Studied Here

• What could you do differently on Monday morning?

• What might you add to your classroom?

• What might be good to remove?

• What changes do you want to make by the start of the next school year?
Core Principles in DAP

1. All domains are important and interrelated.
2. Learning and Development follow sequences,
3. proceed at different rates,
4. result from a dynamic, continuous interaction of biological maturation and experience
5. are influenced by early experiences, and
6. proceed toward greater complexity, self-regulation, and symbolic/representational capacities;
References


• Harvest Resources. SlideShow. [www.harvestresources.com](http://www.harvestresources.com)
Core Principles (cont.)

7. Children need secure consistent relationships
8. Development is in social and cultural contexts
9. Children learn is a variety of ways
10. Play develops self-regulation, language, cognition and social competence
11. Children need challenge beyond their current mastery and practice for new skills
12. Experiences shape motivation and approaches such as persistence, initiative and flexibility