PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF TEACHING YOUNG CHILDREN

Cindy Stephens, Gina Peterson, Sharon Eyrich, & Jennifer Paris
College of the Canyons

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Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children

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Glossary

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Preface

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IS NOT YET FULLY ACCESSIBLE**

Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children

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Created by Cindy Stephens, Gina Peterson, and Sharon Eyrich

Contributions by Nikki Savage

Peer Reviewed by Jennifer Paris

Edited by Alexa Johnson and Jennifer Paris

Graphics by Trudi Radtke

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Looking for resources? See what has been compiled in the Google Group .

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Introduction to Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children

Welcome to College of the Canyon's Early Childhood Education program. We are so excited you have decided to join us on your journey into the wonderful world of young children!

If you are reading this, you're likely interested in learning more about becoming an early childhood professional. Perhaps you're just curious and want to know a little bit more about young children. Maybe you want to make up your mind after finding out a little bit more about what is involved. In either case, your interest and curiosity are two key characteristics that will make this a positive growth experience for you.

You probably had other options but made coming to this class a priority. You care about children. You have an audacity of kindness and passion for teaching. Adhering to these qualities is the launching pad for successful early childhood professionals.

Structure of this Book

You will notice that each chapter begins with important information that pertains to the field of early childhood education as well as providing you with the learning objectives for each chapter. This will help you navigate the content with a deeper understanding.

1. Learning Objectives – Those objectives are identified in the course outline of record. This is what we plan for in setting up the course content. There is an overall arching objective which is called the Course Student Learning Outcome or CSLO. You will see this identified in all of the 8 courses that you will take to complete either your degree or certificate in Early Childhood Education
2. California Early Childhood Educator Competencies – This is a robust document created by a group of professionals to help to guide the field in creating early childhood professionals with the competencies that they need to become quality educators of young children.
3. National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation – These are national competencies, referred to as standards, that help to inform the field and to provide our department with the structure to ensure that when you finish our course of study, you will be prepared to work with young children and their families.
4. National Association for the Education of Young Children Code of Ethical Conduct – This code is our promise to provide children, families, our colleagues, and the community with the integrity needed to be professional early childhood educators.

Flow of the Book

The flow of the text is designed with chapters that build upon each other, so starting at the beginning and moving through in order may make the most sense. In addition to content, we include images, quotes, links (which we will update frequently but may change without our knowledge, so we apologize in advance if that is the case for you), and places to pause and reflect about what you have just read.

The chapters are as follows:

- Chapter 1 History : presents a little about the history of our field and encourages you to dig deeper as your interest dictates
- Chapter 2 Theories : introduces you to some of the major ideas and frameworks used to guide our practices with young children
- Chapter 3 The Early Childhood Teaching Profession : answers many initial questions students may ask about roles, responsibilities, and opportunities in the field of early childhood education
- Chapter 4 Observation and Assessment : Introduces you to the skills of gathering information about young children
- Chapter 5 Developmental Ages and Stages : builds on observational skills to understand the unique characteristics of children at various ages and stages of development
- Chapter 6 Curriculum Basics : builds even further on observational skills and an understanding of developmental ages and stages to provide appropriate interactions and learning experiences for young children
- Chapter 7 Environments : expands beyond curriculum to bring an awareness of the many aspects of planning physical spaces, routines and an interpersonal tone that meet the needs of young children
- Chapter 8 Partnering with Families : introduces the concept of valuing families as a child's first teacher and the importance of partnering to provide positive collaboration between a child's most important worlds, home and school.

Information moving forward to other ECE courses:

- The content in Chapter 1 (History), Chapter 2 (Developmental Theories), and Chapter 5 (Developmental Ages and Stages) will be touched upon in many of your other ECE courses.
- The content in Chapter 4 (Observation and Assessment), Chapter 6 (Curriculum Basics), Chapter 7 (Environments), and Chapter 8 (Partnering with Families) will each have their own course where you will study that particular topic in much more detail.

This class will prepare you to work in the field of early care and education as required by Title 22, Title 5, and Accreditation.

The State of California, Department of Social Services houses a Community Care Licensing Division. A portion of Title 22 of these regulations stipulates requirements for early childhood programs, which includes educational requirements, of which this course applies.

The State of California Department of Education further regulates early childhood programs receiving any form of state funding through Title V (5). This course meets a portion of that academic requirement.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children offers Accreditation to those programs that apply and meet all qualifications of a quality program as defined by this organization. This course is included in the academic requirements.

The regulations above covered in Chapter 3 (The Early Childhood Teaching Profession) with the links included for you to investigate further. Knowledge of the regulations that govern our work with children and families is important as it provides the basis for our profession.

You will also find useful information about the ECE Department at College of the Canyons, as well as state and national content in Chapter 3. Our department website has many links in place to assist you in your endeavors. We encourage you to visit it often and take full advantage of the content that is there for you.

Beginning your JOurney

As a department, we believe strongly in supporting future educators, as a group and as individuals. As you begin your course work with us, we see you as just that. You are now beginning your college journey that will end with your successful completion of the coursework required to work with young children and their families. As such, we are here to hold you to high standards and to support you in meeting those standards. Working with children can be very rewarding as well as challenging.

In your work with young children and families, you will be expected to:

- work hard
- arrive on time
- come prepared
- participate fully
- continue to grow and learn
- be respectful to yourself, others and property
- maintain confidentiality
- behave in a professional and ethical manner at all times

What better place to practice these skills than in your ECE courses. We will expect that you will practice each of the skills mentioned above in every early childhood course you take so that they are perfected by the time you begin your career. This is also a time for you to

- Ask questions
- Try new things

- Step outside your comfort zone
- Join our campus organizations
- Get to know your current classmates who will be your future colleagues
- Get to know your professors, they are here to support you
- Have fun and enjoy the experience

What a wonderful balance! Learning new content as well as the professional skills needed to succeed in your future career!

NAEYC Standards of Early Childhood Professional Preparation

As mentioned early, the beginning of each chapter includes a list of the professional standards that the chapter will be addressing. At College of the Canyons, we are in the process of applying for NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation. What that means, is that we need to use the standards to frame what we teach you and why. You can think of them as competencies that help to inform what early educators need to know to become professionals. They include.

- Standard 1: Having knowledge of how children grow and develop and using that to create respectful learning environments. (ECE 100, 101, & 104)
- Standard 2 : Engaging with families to respect their diversity and involve them in their children's school life promotes more satisfactory school experiences for both the child and the family. (ECE 100 & 102)
- Standard 3 : Using observation and assessment to guide what we do in the classroom is critical in supporting young children and their families. (ECE 100, 103 & 106)
- Standard 4 : The use of positive relationships coupled with strategies that are geared toward the development of the child, allows us to connect with children and families. (ECE 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, & 200)
- Standard 5: Understanding how to build meaningful curriculum comes from your understanding of how children grow and develop, what is meaningful to them, and what is appropriate for them to explore. Increasing skills of inquiry, specifically, acknowledgment of children's curiosity, guides how we plan and implement our curriculum and environment. (ECE 100, 104, 105, & 106)
- Standard 6 : Engaging in continuous learning, reflective practice, advocacy for children and their families, upholding ethical and professional standards is our professional responsibility. (ECE 200 and ECE 203 – which is not one of the 8 core courses you need for your ADT degree in ECE)
- Standard 7 : Engaging in field experience enhances our connection with high quality programs that follow the previous standards, applying the knowledge learned in your course of study, affords you opportunities to develop your beliefs (philosophy) of how children grow and develop and your role as a future teacher. (ECE 103, 104, 105, 106, & 200)

College of the canyon's course of study

In looking over these 7 standards, we hope that you are able to make the connection to our course of study. ECE 100 - Principles and Practices of Early Childhood Education, the course you are currently enrolled in, is a survey course. It looks at the broad spectrum of the field. As you continue on your journey through our program, you will take courses that specifically address each standard. We hope that when you have completed the 24 units of Early Childhood Education, you will meet the competencies needed to begin your journey as an early childhood professional. Those courses are

- ECE 100 Principles and Practices of Early Childhood Education
- ECE 101 Child Growth and Development
- ECE 102 Child, Family, and Community
- ECE 103 Observation and Assessment
- ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education
- ECE 105 Health, Safety, and Nutrition in Early Childhood Education
- ECE 106 The Role of Equity and Diversity in Early Childhood Education
- ECE 200 Practicum – Field Experience

Of course, you can always continue on that journey enrolling in any of our other courses:

- ECE 130 Infant/Toddler Development and Curriculum
- ECE 135 School Age Child Care Programs and Curriculum
- ECE 140 Curriculum for School-Age Children
- ECE 144 Music and Movement for the Young Child
- ECE 151 Art and Creativity for Young Children
- ECE 155 Science and Math for the Young Child
- ECE 156 Literature and Language Development for the Young Child
- ECE 160 Understanding and Education of Children with Special Needs
- ECE 201 Supervision and Administration of Children's Programs
- ECE 202 Advanced Supervision and Administration of Children's Programs
- ECE 203 Adult Supervision and the Mentor Process in Early Childhood Education

or in other higher educational coursework learning more deeply, how to serve children and families with an intentional, supportive disposition.

Welcome to the field future colleagues, we wish you well!

College of the Canyons, Early Childhood Education Department

Chapter 1 – The History of Early Childhood Education

Learning Objective:

- Examine historical and theoretical frameworks as they apply to current early childhood practices.

NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation are addressed in this chapter:

Standard 1: Promoting child development and learning

Standard 2: Building family and community relationships

Standard 6: Becoming a professional

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

The following competencies are addressed in this chapter:

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Professionalism
- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance
- Special Needs and Inclusion

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: – I-1.1, I-1.2, I-1.5, I-1.8, I-1.9

Principles: P-1.1, P-1.2, P-1.7, P-1.11

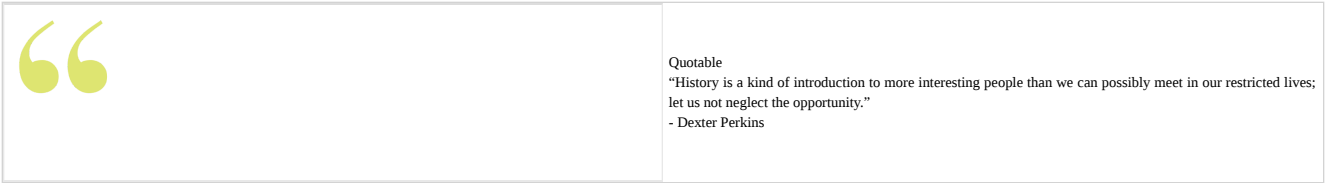
Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals: I-2.1, I-2.2, I-2.4, I-2.7, I-2.8, I-2.9

Principles: P-2.2, P-2.3

Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Ideals: I:4.1 (individual), I-4.6, I-4.7, I-4.8



Preview

This chapter covers the historical underpinnings of the field of Early Childhood Education. You will discover the various influences that have been used as principles that have shaped current practices in early childhood settings.

As you begin your journey exploring the field that studies young children, you will come across several terms that are commonly used. While they are often used interchangeably, there are subtle differences which should be clarified at the start:

- Early Childhood: the stage of development from birth to age 8
- Child Development: the ways a child develops over time
- Early Childhood Education: the unique ways young children "learn" and the ways they are "taught". Part of the larger field of "education".
- Early Care and Education: A blend of the care young children need as well as the way they are "educated". Sometimes called "educare".

In this text we will use them interchangeably to mean the many ways children develop blended with their unique care and educational needs.

History of Early Childhood Education

Childhood from a Historical Perspective

The field of Early Childhood Education has a rich history. As you will soon discover, history has not only provided us with a strong foundation, it has shaped our beliefs, instilled an appreciation for children, and it has provided us with a context that guides our current practices.

It is hard to imagine but children were not always considered valued members of society. You might say, children were thought to be second class citizens. In the past, many believed that children should be seen and not heard, and that children should be ruled by might (e.g. “spare the rod spoil the child”). Often time’s children were punished harshly for behaviors that today we understand to be “typical” development.

In the past, childhood was not seen as a separate stage of development. There was not time for childhood curiosity and playful experiences. Children were thought of as little adults and they were expected to “earn their keep”. The expectation was that they would learn the family trade and carry on their family lineage.

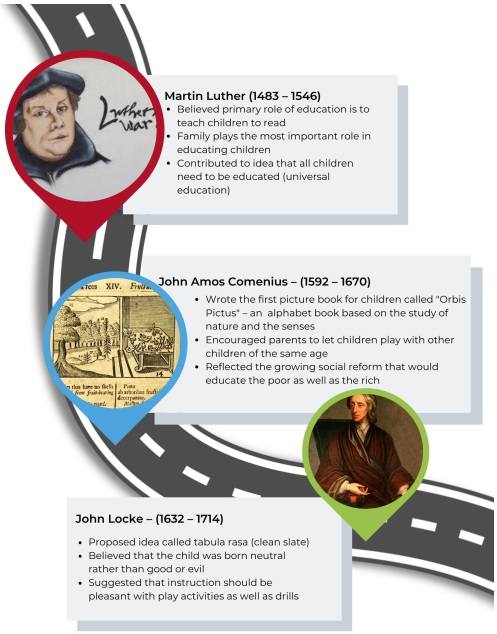
Going to school was thought to be a privilege and only children of a certain class, race and status were given the opportunity to have a formal education. The primary curriculum for that era was based on biblical teachings and a typical school day consisted of lessons being taught by an adult in charge who wasn’t trained as a teacher.

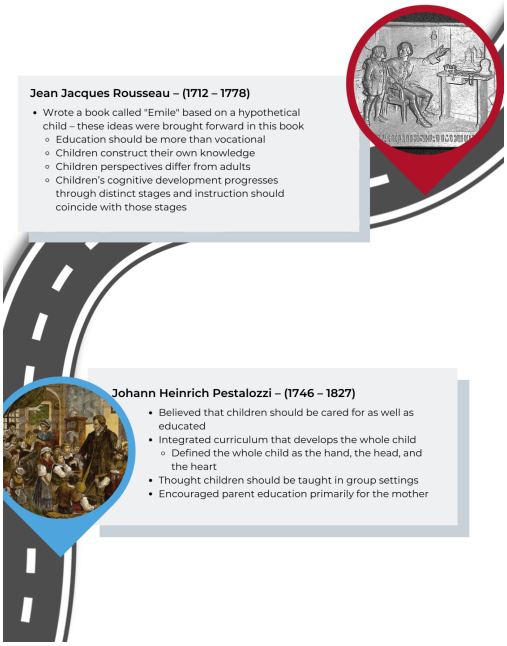
A Time for Change

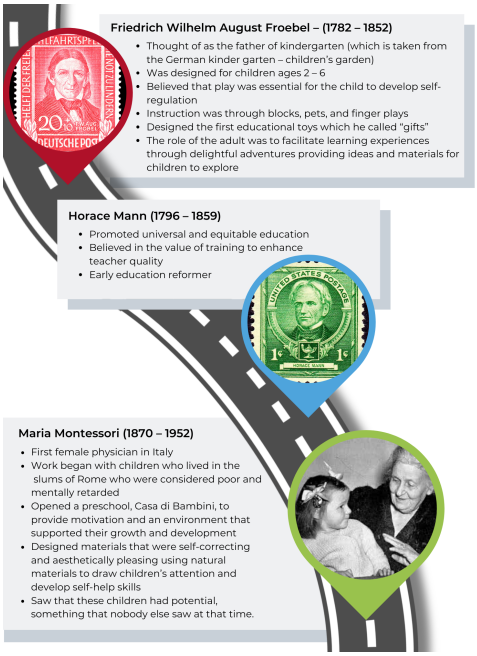
It’s important to note that historically, parents had no formal training on how to raise a healthy well-adjusted child. The only “parenting book” for that time was the Bible and even then, many were not able to read it. They parented based on what the church taught, and it was these strict morals and values that informed societal beliefs and guided child rearing. It wasn’t until the 1400-1600’s, during the Renaissance, that children were seen as pure and good. New ideals began to surface. Individuals that thought differently (outside the box) began to question and investigate treatment of children. They began to observe and notice there was more to children. These were the first advocates to try and enlighten society and change the adult viewpoint in an effort to improve outcomes and support children’s growth and development. Unfortunately, many were persecuted or ostracized for being outspoken and going against the society beliefs.

Let’s take a look at some of the historical contributors to early care and education.

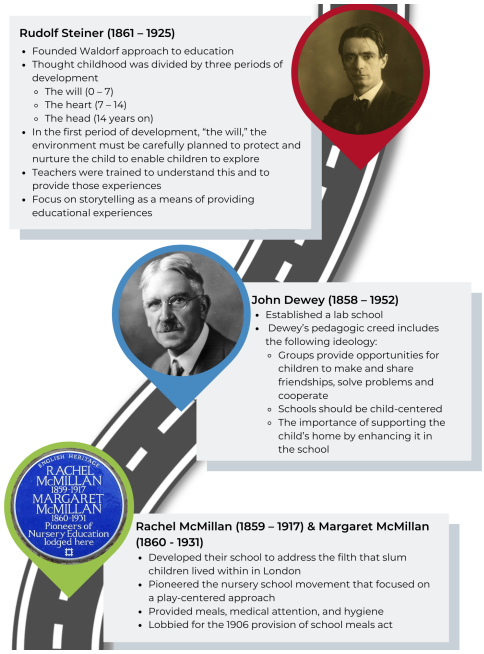
Philosophical Influences [1]

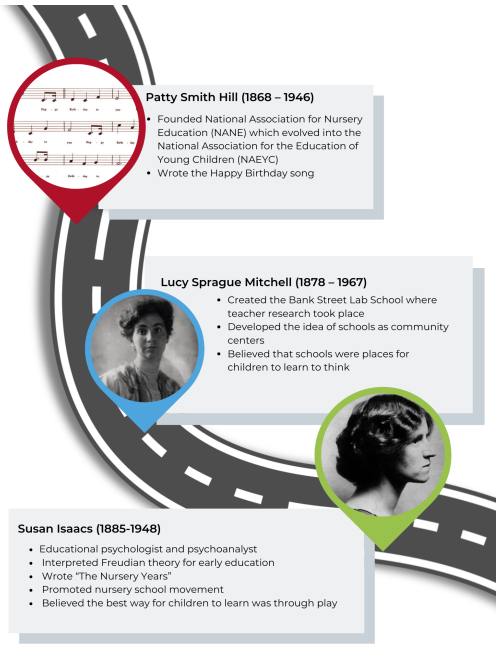

Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)
• Believed primary role of education is to teach children to read
• Family plays the most important role in educating children
• Contributed to idea that all children need to be educated (universal education)
John Amos Comenius – (1592 – 1670)
• Wrote the first picture book for children called "Orbis Pictus" – an alphabet book based on the study of nature and the senses
• Encouraged parents to let children play with other children of the same age
• Reflected the growing social reform that would educate the poor as well as the rich
John Locke – (1632 – 1714)
• Proposed idea called tabula rasa (clean slate)
• Believed that the child was born neutral rather than good or evil
• Suggested that instruction should be pleasant with play activities as well as drills

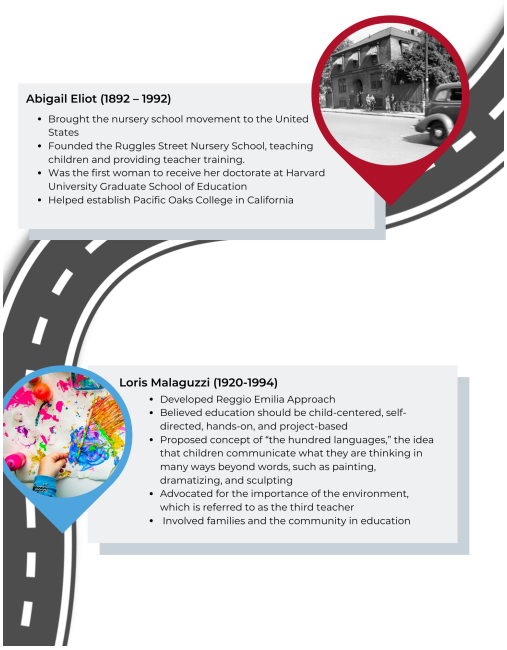

Jean Jacques Rousseau – (1712 – 1778)
• Wrote a book called "Emile" based on a hypothetical child – these ideas were brought forward in this book
◦ Education should be more than vocational
◦ Children construct their own knowledge
◦ Children perspectives differ from adults
◦ Children's cognitive development progresses through distinct stages and instruction should coincide with those stages
Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi – (1746 – 1827)
• Believed that children should be cared for as well as educated
• Integrated curriculum that develops the whole child
◦ Defined the whole child as the hand, the head, and the heart
• Thought children should be taught in group settings
• Encouraged parent education primarily for the mother



Educational Influences [2]




Patty Smith Hill (1868 – 1946)
• Founded National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) which evolved into the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
• Wrote the Happy Birthday song
Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1878 – 1967)
• Created the Bank Street Lab School where teacher research took place
• Developed the idea of schools as community centers
• Believed that schools were places for children to learn to think
Susan Isaacs (1885-1948)
• Educational psychologist and psychoanalyst
• Interpreted Freudian theory for early education
• Wrote "The Nursery Years"
• Promoted nursery school movement
• Believed the best way for children to learn was through play



The individuals mentioned in roadmap were noted philosophers and educators who sought to change the status quo. By advocating for the welfare and education of children they were instrumental in bringing an awareness that childhood is an important stage of life. It is critical to note that there were other influences from the field of psychology and medicine that also informed the field of early care and education.

The following interdisciplinary influences have contributed directly and indirectly to education, they run separate but parallel from the philosophers and educators on the roadmap, moving through time on their own track. As you consider these influences think about how their philosophies and theories intersected with education and child development.

Interdisciplinary Influences [3]

Interdisciplinary refers to more than one branch of knowledge. In the case of Early Childhood Education, the disciplines include medicine, psychology, biology, parent educators and other early childhood professionals who have knowledge that helps to inform our practices with children and families. The collective knowledge we gain from these contributions, gives our field the evidence to support the role of the teacher in providing engaging environments, meaningful curriculum, guidance strategies, etc. This is often referred to as "best practices." As you continue to engage with this textbook, this will become more apparent to you as it relates to the unique role of an early childhood professional.

Contemporary Influences [4]

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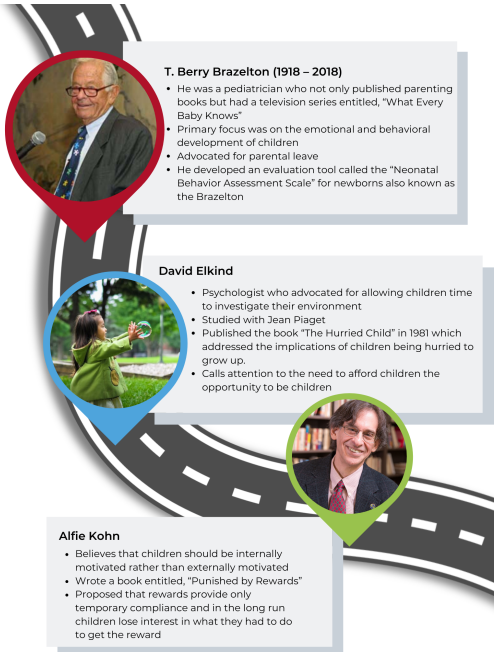
T. Berry Brazelton (1918 – 2018)
• He was a pediatrician who not only published parenting books but had a television series entitled, "What Every Baby Knows"
• Primary focus was on the emotional and behavioral development of children
• Advocated for parental leave
• He developed an evaluation tool called the "Neonatal Behavior Assessment Scale" for newborns also known as the Brazelton
David Elkind
• Psychologist who advocated for allowing children time to investigate their environment
• Studied with Jean Piaget
• Published the book "The Hurried Child" in 1981 which addressed the implications of children being hurried to grow up.
• Calls attention to the need to afford children the opportunity to be children
Alfie Kohn
• Believes that children should be internally motivated rather than externally motivated
• Wrote a book entitled, "Punished by Rewards"
• Proposed that rewards provide only temporary compliance and in the long run children lose interest in what they had to do to get the reward

In Closing

This chapter has exposed you to some of the historical influences that have informed the field of early childhood education. In the next chapter, you will be given the opportunity to investigate theoretical ideologies that have been shaped by these influences. When we combine the historical content with theory, we have a stronger foundation for providing the care and support that children need as they grow and develop.

Pause to Reflect
How has history informed our current trends and practices in the field of early care and education? What stands out to you as your future or current role as an early childhood professional?

References

Chapter 2 – Developmental and Learning Theories

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Examine historical and theoretical frameworks as they apply to current early childhood practices.

NAEYC STANDARDS

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation are addressed in this chapter:

Standard 1: Promoting child development and learning

Standard 5: Using content knowledge to build meaningful curriculum

Standard 6: Becoming a professional

CALIFORNIA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR COMPETENCIES

Child Development and Learning

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Dual Language Development

Learning Environments and Curriculum
Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance

Special Needs and Inclusion

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (NAEYC) CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT (MAY 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: – I-1.1 through I-1.11

Principles: P-1.1, P-1.2, P – 1.3, P-1.7

Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Ideals: I:4.1, I-4.6, I-4.8

PREVIEW

This chapter begins with the developmental and learning theories that guide our practices with young children who are in our care. The theories presented in this chapter help us to better understand the complexity of human development. The chapter concludes by looking at some of the current topics about children's development that inform and influence the field. With this valuable insight, we can acquire effective strategies to support the whole child – physically, cognitively, and affectively.

Quotable
"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults."
- F. Douglas

WHAT IS A THEORY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

As with the historical perspectives that were discussed in Chapter 1, theories provide varied and in-depth perspectives that can be used to explain the complexity of human development.

Human development is divided into 3 main areas: Physical, Cognitive, and Affective. Together these address the development of the whole child.

Physical-motor development – this includes our gross motor, fine motor, and perceptual-motor. [5]

Cognitive or intellectual development – this includes our thoughts and how our brain processes information, as well as utilizes language so that we can communicate with one another. [6]

Affective development – this includes our emotions, social interactions, personality, creativity, spirituality, and the relationships we have with ourselves and others. [7]

All three areas of development are of critical importance in how we support the whole child. For example, if we are more concerned about a child's cognitive functioning we may neglect to give attention to their affective development. We know that when a child feels good about themselves and their capabilities, they are often able to take the required risks to learn about something new to them. Likewise, if a child is able to use their body to learn, that experience helps to elevate it to their brain.

Quotable
"If it isn't in the body, it can't be in the brain."
- Bev Boss

Quotable
"Students who are loved at home come to school to learn, and students who aren't, come to school to be loved."
- Nicholas A. Ferroni

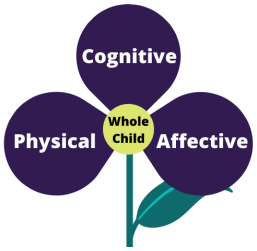

Figure 2.1 Whole Child Flower. [8]

Theories help us to understand behaviors and recognize developmental milestones so that we can organize our thoughts and consider how to best support a child's individual needs. With this information, we can then plan and implement learning experiences that are appropriate for the development of that child (called, "developmentally appropriate practice, which is discussed more later in this chapter), set up engaging environments, and most importantly, we can develop realistic expectations based on the child's age and stage of development.

A theory is defined as "a supposition, or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained, a set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based." [9]

The theories we chose to include in this text form the underlying "principles" that guide us in the decisions we make about the children in our care, as well as provide us with insight on how to best support children as they learn, grow, and develop. The theories that have been selected were proposed by scientists and theorists who studied human development extensively. Each, with their own unique hypothesis, set out to examine and explain development by collecting data through observations/experiments. The theorists we selected, strived to answer pertinent questions about how we develop and become who we are. Some sought to explain why we do what we do, while others studied when we should achieve certain skills. Here are a few of the questions developmental theorists have considered:

- Is development due to maturation or due to experience? This is often described as the nature versus nurture debate . Theorists who side with nature propose that development stems from innate genetics or heredity. It is believed that as soon as we are conceived, we are wired with certain dispositions and characteristics that dictate our growth and development. Theorists who side with nurture claim that it is the physical and temporal experiences or environment that shape and influence our development. It is thought that our environment -our socio-economic status, the neighborhood we grow up in, and the schools we attend, along with our parents' values and religious upbringing impact our growth and development. Many experts feel it is no longer an "either nature OR nurture" debate but rather a matter of degree; which influences development more?
- Does one develop gradually or does one undergo specific changes during distinct time frames? This is considered the continuous or discontinuous debate . On one hand, some theorists propose that growth and development are continuous ; it is a slow and gradual transition that occurs over time, much like an acorn growing into a giant oak tree. While on the other hand, there are theorists that consider growth and development to be discontinuous ; which suggests that we become different organisms altogether as we transition from one stage of development to another, similar to a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

Pause to Reflect… Personal Growth and Development
Think about your own growth and development.

1. Do you favor one side of the nature vs nurture debate?
2. Which premise seems to make more sense – continuous or discontinuous development?

Take a moment to jot down some ideas. Your ideas help to create opportunities to deepen our understanding and to frame our important work with young children and their families.?

As suggested earlier, not only do theories help to explain key components of human development, theories also provide practitioners with valuable insight that can be utilized to support a child's learning, growth, and development. At this time, we would like to mention that although theories are based on notable scientific discoveries, it is necessary to emphasize the following:

- No one theory exclusively explains everything about a child's development.
- Theories are designed to help us make educated guesses about children's development
- Each theory focuses on a different aspect of human development
- Theories often build on previous theoretical concepts and may seek to expand ideals or explore new facets.

Let's take a look at the theories:

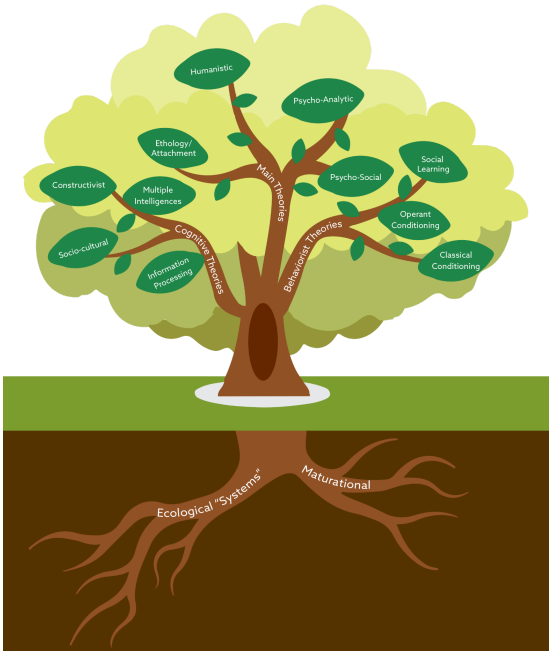

Figure 2.2 The Theory Tree. [10]

We are going to break it up as follows:

Table 2.1 Roots - Foundational Theories [11]

Theory	Key Points	Application
Maturational Arnold Gesell 1880 - 1961	• All children move through stages as they grow and mature • On average, most children of the same age are in the same stage • There are stages in all areas of development (physical, cognitive, language, affective) • You can't rush stages	• There are "typical" ages and stages • Understand current stage as well as what comes before and after • Give many experiences that meet the children at their current stage of development • When child is ready they move to the next stage
Ecological "Systems" Urie Bronfenbrenner 1917 – 2005	• There is broad outside influence on development • (Family, school, community, culture, friends ….) • There "environmental" influences impact development significantly	• Be aware of all systems that affect child • Learning environment have impact on the developing child • Home, school, community are important • Supporting families supports children

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Table 2.2 Branches – Topical Theories [12]

Theory	Key Points	Application
Psycho-Analytic Sigmund Freud 1856 – 1939	• Father of Psychology • Medical doctor trying to heal illness • We have an unconscious • Early experiences guide later behavior • Young children seek pleasure (id) • Ego is visible; when wounded can get defensive • Early stages of development are critical to healthy development	• Understand unconscious motivations • Create happy and healthy early experiences for later life behaviors • Know children are all about "ME" • Expect ego defenses • Keep small items out of toddlers reach • Treat toileting lightly

Psycho-Social Erik Erikson 1902 – 1994	• Relationships are crucial and form the social context of personality • Early experiences shape our later relationships and sense of self • Trust, autonomy, initiative – are the early stages of development • Humans like to feel competent and valued	• Provide basic trust (follow through on promises, provide stability and consistency, …) • Create a sense of "belongingness" • Support autonomy and exploration • Help children feel confident • Encourage trying things and taking safe risks • See mistakes as learning opportunities
Humanistic Abraham Maslow 1908-1970	• We have basic and growth needs • Basic needs must be met first • We move up the pyramid toward self-actualization	• Make sure basic needs like nutrition, sleep, safety is taken care of • Understand movement between needs • Know needs may be individual or as a group
Ethology/Attachment John Bowlby 1907-1990 Mary Ainsworth 1913 - 1999	• Biological basis for development • Serve evolutionary function for humankind • There are sensitive periods • Attachment is crucial for survival • Dominance hierarchies can serve survival function	• Understand evolutionary functions • Offer positive and appropriate opportunities doing sensitive periods • Facilitate healthy attachments

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Table 2.3 Branches – Cognitive Theories [13]

Theory	Key Points	Application
Constructivist Jean Piaget 1896 – 1980	• We construct knowledge from within • Active learning and exploration • Brains organize and adapt • Need time and repetition • Distinct stages (not mini-adults) • Sensory-motor, pre-operational	• Provide exploration and active learning • Ask open ended questions/promote thinking • Repeat often • Don't rush • Allow large blocks of time • Value each unique stage • Provide sensory and motor experiences • Provide problem solving experience
Socio-cultural Lev Vygotsky 1896 – 1934	• Learning occurs within a social context • Scaffolding – providing appropriate support to increase learning • "Zone of proximal development" = "readiness to learn" something	• Provide appropriate adult-child interactions • Encourage peer interactions • Provide a little help, then step back • Understand when a child is ready; don't push them or do it for them
Information Processing (Computational Theory) 1970 -	• Brain is like a computer • Input, process, store, retrieve • Early experiences create learning pathways • Cortisol – stress hormone shuts down thinking • Endorphins – "happy" hormone, increases learning	• Develop healthy brains (nutrition, sleep, exercise) • Decrease stress, increase happiness • Know sensory input (visual, auditory ….) • Understand individual differences • Allow time to process
Multiple Intelligences Howard Gardner 1943 -	• Once information enters the brain, each brain processes information differently	• Provide learning experiences to meet a wide range of learning styles • Help learners learn how they learn best • Offer many experiences in a variety of ways

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Table 2.4 Branches – Behaviorist Theories

Theory	Key Points	Application
Classical Conditioning Ivan Pavlov 1849 - 1936	• We respond automatically to some stimuli • When we pair a neutral stimulus with the one that elicits a response we can train the subject to respond to it • Over time we can "un-pair" stimulus and response	• Be aware of conditioning • Pair stimuli to elicit desired responses • Look for pairings in undesirable behaviors
Operant Conditioning B. F. Skinner 1904 – 1990	• Behavior is related to consequences • Reinforcement/Rewards/Punishment • Goals of behavior (motivators)	• Understand what is motivating behavior • Reinforce behavior we want • Don't reinforce behavior we don't want • Consider small increments
Social Learning Albert Bandura 1925 -	• Children (and adults) learn through observation • Children (and adults) model what they see	• Know what children are watching • Model what you want children to do

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CURRENT DEVELOPMENTAL TOPICS TO INFORM OUR PRACTICE WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Brain Functioning

In the 21 st century, we have medical technology that has enabled us to discover more about how the brain functions. "Neuroscience research has developed sophisticated technologies, such as ultrasound; magnetic resonance imaging (MRI); positron emission tomography (PET); and effective, non-invasive ways to study brain chemistry (such as the steroid hormone cortisol)." [14] These technologies have made it possible to investigate what is happening in the brain, both how it is wired and how the chemicals in our brain affect our functioning. Here are some important aspects, from this research, for us to consider in working with children and families:

Rushton (2011) provides these four principles that help us to connect the dots to classroom practice:

Principle #1 : "Every brain is uniquely organized" When setting up our environments, it is important to use this lens so we can provide varied materials, activities, and interactions that are responsive to each individual child. (We expand on this in Chapter 5 – Developmental Ages and Stages/Guidance).

Principle #2 : "The brain is continually growing, changing, and adapting to the environment."

- The brain operates on a "lose it or use it" principle. Why is this important? We know that we are born with about 100 billion brain cells and 50 trillion connections among them. We know that we need to use our brain to grow those cells and connections or they will wither away. Once they are gone, it is impossible to get them back.
- Children who are not properly nourished, both with nutrition and stimulation suffer from deterioration of brain cells and the connections needed to grow a healthy brain.
- Early experiences help to shape the brain. Attunement (which is a bringing into harmony,) with a child, creates that opportunity to make connections.

Principle #3 : “A brain-compatible classroom enables connection of learning to positive emotions.”

- Give children reasonable choices.
- Allow children to make decisions. (yellow shovel or blue shovel, jacket on or off, etc.)
- Allow children the full experience of the decisions they make. Mistakes are learning opportunities. (F.A.I.L. – First attempt in learning). Trying to do things multiple times and in multiple ways provides children with a healthy self-image.

Principle #4 : “Children’s brains need to be immersed in real life, hands-on, and meaningful learning experiences that are intertwined with a commonality and require some form of problem-solving.”

- Facilitate exploration in children’s individual and collective interests.
- Give children the respect to listen and engage regarding their findings.
- Give children time to explore.
- Give children the opportunity to make multiple hypotheses about what they are discovering.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), one of the professional organizations in the field of early childhood education, has a position statement from 2009 (note they are currently revising this position statement and are looking for feedback from the field, if you are interested in advocacy for young children, you may want to take the opportunity to review it and give feedback: https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/dap .) There are three important aspects of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP): [15]

1. What is known about child development and learning – referring to knowledge of age-related characteristics that permits general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children’s learning and development.
2. What is known about each child as an individual – referring to what practitioners learn about each child that has implications for how best to adapt and be responsive to that individual variation.
3. What is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live – referring to the values, expectations, and behavioral and linguistic conventions that shape children’s lives at home and in their communities that practitioners must strive to understand in order to ensure that learning experiences in the program or school are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family.

What does this mean?

Utilizing the core components of DAP is important as practitioners of early learning. Here are some things to consider:

- Knowledge about child development and learning helps up to make predictions about what children of a particular age group are like typically. This helps us to make decisions with some confidence about how we set up the environment, what learning materials we use in our classrooms, and what are the kinds of interactions and activities that will support the children in our class. In addition, this knowledge tells us that groups of children and the individual children within that group will be the same in some ways and different in other ways.
- To be an effective early childhood professional, we must use a variety of methods – such as observation, clinical interviews, examination of children’s work, individual child assessments, and talking with families so we get to know each individual child in the group well. When we have compiled the information we need to support each child, we can make plans and adjustments to promote each child’s individual development and learning as fully as possible.
- Each child grows up in a family and in a broader social and cultural community. This provides our understanding of what our group considers appropriate, values, expects, admires, etc. (think Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Theory and Vygotsky’s Socio-Cultural Theory). These understandings help us to absorb “rules” about behaviors – how do I show respect in my culture, how do I interact with people I know well and I have just met (as a teacher you will be in the just met category for a while), how do I regard time and personal space, how should I dress, etc. When young children are in a group setting outside their home, what makes the most sense to them, how they use language to interact, and how they experience this new world depend on the social and cultural contexts to which they are accustomed. Skilled teachers consider such contextual factors along with the children’s ages and their individual differences, in shaping all aspects of the learning environments. (More content will be in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 that will help you to deeply understand DAP)

To summarize how to make use of DAP, an effective teacher begins by thinking about what children of that chronological and developmental age are like. This knowledge provides a general idea of the activities, routines, interactions, and curriculum that will be effective with that group of children. The teacher must also consider how each child is an individual within the context of family, community, culture, linguistic norms, social group, past experience, and current circumstances. Once the teacher can fully see children as they are, they are able to make decisions that are developmentally and culturally appropriate for each of the children in their care.

Identity Formation

Who we are is a very important aspect of our well-being. As children grow and develop, their identity is shaped by who they are when they arrive on this planet and the adults and peers whom they interact with throughout their lifespan. Many theories give us supportive evidence that helps us to see that our self-concept is critical to the social and emotional health of human beings. (ex. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory, John Bowlby’s Attachment Theory, etc.) As early childhood professionals, we are called upon to positively support the social/emotional development of the children and the families that we serve. We do this by:

- Honoring each unique child and the family they are a part of.
- Acknowledging their emotions with attunement and support.
- Listening to hear not to respond.
- Providing an emotionally safe space in our early childhood environments.
- Recognizing that all emotions are important and allowing children the freedom to express their emotions while providing them the necessary containment of safety.

Our social-emotional life or our self-concept has many aspects to it. We are complex beings and we have several identities that early childhood professionals need to be aware of when interacting with the children and families in their early childhood environments. Our identities include but are not limited to the following categories:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Economic Class
- Sexual Identity
- Religion
- Language
- (Dis)abilities
- Age

Understanding our own identities and that we are all unique, helps us to build meaningful relationships with children and families that enable us to have understanding and compassion. Being aware (using reflective practice) that all humans are diverse and our environments, both emotionally and physically, need to affirm all who come to our environments to learn and grow.

While we begin to form our identities from the moment we are conceived, identity formation is not stagnant. It is a dynamic process that develops throughout the life span. Hence, it is our ethical responsibility as early childhood professionals to create supportive language, environments, and inclusive practices that will affirm all who are a part of our early learning programs.

While we delve more into guiding the behavior of young children in Chapter 5, there is evidence that when children feel supported and accepted by adults for who they are, this helps to wire and equip the brain for self-regulation. As we model regulation behavior (this is often identified as co-regulation behavior) which includes acceptance, compassion, belonging, and empathy, we are helping children to develop the regulation skills needed to get along and live in a diverse society.

Pause to Reflect… Gender Stereotypes

In American society, we have established and readily accept gender stereotypes. We have many biases about how boys and girls should look and behave. If you have grown up in America, you may be familiar with some of the following gender stereotypes:

- Only girls cry.
- Boys are stronger than girls.
- Boys are active and girls are passive.
- It's ok for boys to be physically and emotionally aggressive after all they are just being boys.

What other gender stereotypes have you heard?

These stereotypes are so ingrained in us that we are often unconscious of how we perpetuate them. For example, we may compliment girls on their clothing and boys on their strength. We are called to look at our stereotypes/biases and find ways to counteract them when we are faced with the variety of ways in which boys and girls behave in our early childhood classrooms. How can we do that? We do that by engaging in dialogue with others to challenge our stereotypes and change our practices to create more inclusive and supportive environments.

Note- This is an example of only one of the identity categories that is mentioned above. Think about what other stereotypes you have about the other categories of identity listed above. What can you do to challenge your assumptions/biases to help you in becoming an early childhood professional who engages in inclusive and supportive practices?

Attachment

"Attachment is the tendency of human infants and animals to become emotionally close to certain individuals and to be calm and soothed while in their presence. Human infants develop strong emotional bonds with a caregiver, particularly a parent, and attachment to their caregivers is a step toward establishing a feeling of security in the world. When fearful or anxious the infant is comforted by contact with their object. For humans, attachment also involves and affects the tendency in adulthood to seek emotionally supportive relationships." [16]

As noted in Attachment Theory, co-created by Bowlby and Ainsworth, it is clear to us that attachment is a critical component of healthy development. Our brains are wired for attachment. Many of you may have witnessed a newborn baby as they interact with their parents/caregivers. Their very survival hinges on the attachment bonds that develop as they grow and develop. Children who are not given the proper support for attachment to occur may develop reactive attachment disorder. Reactive attachment disorder is a rare but serious condition in which an infant or young child does not establish healthy attachments with parents or caregivers. Reactive attachment disorder may develop if the child's basic needs for comfort, affection, and nurturing are not met and loving, caring, stable attachments with others are not established. [17]

Why is this important for early childhood practitioners to know? The role of an early childhood professional is one of caregiving. While you are not the parent, nor a substitute for the parent, you do provide care for children in the absence of their parent. Families bring their children to early childhood centers for a whole host of reasons, but one thing that they share is that they trust their child's caregivers to meet the need of their child is a loving and supportive way.

Healthy attachments begin with a bond with the child's primary caregivers (usually their family) and then extend to others who provide care for their child. How we as early childhood professionals care and support children, either adds or detracts from their healthy attachment. Our primary role is to ensure that the needs of children are met with love and support.

It is also possible that children may enter our early childhood environment with unhealthy attachment or could possibly have reactive attachment disorder. In this case, it is our ethical and moral responsibility to meet with the family (in Chapter 8 – Partnering with Families more context and content will be given to support this statement) and to provide them with resources and support that could they could use to help their children to have better outcomes. As the course of study of an early childhood professional, affords them with knowledge and understanding of how children grow and develop, families do not often have this foundational knowledge. It is our duty to develop a reciprocal relationship with families that is respectful and compassionate. When we offer them support, we do so without judgment.

The Value of Play in Childhood

There has been much research done in recent years about the importance of play for young children. During the last 20 years, we have seen a decline in valuable play practices for children from birth to age 8. This decline has been shown to be detrimental to the healthy development of young children as play is the vehicle in which they learn about and discover the world.

Quotable

"Play is a legitimate right of childhood, representing a crucial aspect of children's physical, intellectual, and social development." [18]

The true sense of play is that it is spontaneous, rewarding and fun. It has numerous benefits for young children as well as throughout the lifespan.

- It helps children build foundational skills for learning to read, write and do math.
- It helps children learn to navigate their social world. How to socialize with peers, how to understand others, how to communicate and negotiate with others, and how to identify who they are and what they like.
- It encourages children to learn, to imagine, to categorize, to be curious, to solve problems, and to love learning.
- It gives children opportunities to express what is troubling them about their daily life, including the stresses that exist within their home and other stresses that arise for them outside of the home.

If you remember from the history chapter (Chapter 1), Fredrich Froebel introduced the concept of Kindergarten which literally means "child's garden." If you recall, the focus of the kindergarten that Froebel envisioned, focused on the whole child rather than specific subjects. The primary idea is that children should first develop social, emotional, motor, and cognitive skills in order to transform that learning to be ready for the demands on primary school (Chapter 6 – Early Childhood Programming will provide more detail about this). Play is the primary way in which children learn and grow in the early years.

A teacher who understands the importance and value of play organizes the early childhood environment with meaningful activities and learning opportunities (aka Curriculum) to support the children in their classroom. This means that the collective and individuality of the children are taken into consideration as well as their social and cultural contexts (DAP).

Here are some things to consider in thinking about play:

- Play is relatively free of rules and is child-directed.
- Play is carried out as if it is real life. (As it is real life for the child)
- Play focusing on being rather than doing or the end result. (It is a process, not a product)
- Play requires the interaction and involvement of the children and the support, either direct or indirect, of the early childhood professional.

Throughout the early years of development (0 -8), young children engage in many different forms of play. Those forms of play include but are not limited to: [19]

- Symbolic Play – play which provides children with opportunities to make sense of the things that they see (for example, using a piece of wood to symbolize a person or an object)
- Rough and Tumble Play – this is more about contact and less about fighting, it is about touching, tickling, gauging relative strength, discovering flexibility and the exhilaration of display, it releases energy and it allows children to participate in physical contact without resulting in someone getting hurt
- Socio-Dramatic Play – playing house, going to the store, being a mother, father, etc., it is the enactment of the roles in which they see around them and their interpretation of those roles, it's an opportunity for adults to witness how children internalize their experiences
- Social Play – this is play in which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored, and amended

- Creative Play – play which allows new responses, transformation of information awareness of new connections with an element of surprise, allows children to use and try out their imagination
- Communication Play – using words, gestures, charades, jokes, play-acting, singing, whispering, exploring the various ways in which we communicate as humans
- Locomotor Play – movement in any or every direction (for example, chase, tag, hide and seek, tree climbing)
- Deep Play – it allows children to encounter risky or even potentially life-threatening experiences, to develop survival skills, and conquer fear (for example, balancing on a high beam, roller skating, high jump, riding a bike)
- Fantasy Play – the type of play allows the child to let their imagination run wild, to arrange the world in the child's way, a way that is unlikely to occur (for example, play at being a pilot and flying around the world), pretending to be various characters/people, be wherever and whatever they want to be and do
- Object Play – use of hand-eye manipulations and movements

Communicating with families about the power and importance of play is necessary but can be tricky. In an article entitled, "10 Things Every Parent Should Know About Play" by Laurel Bongiorno published by NAEYC (found on naeyc.org), this is what she states: [20]

1. Children learn through play
2. Play is healthy
3. Play reduces stress
4. Play is more than meets the eye
5. Make time for play
6. Play and learning go hand-in-hand
7. Play outside
8. There's a lot to learn about play
9. Trust your own playful instincts
10. Play is a child's context for learning

As you continue your studies in early childhood education, you will begin to form and inform your own ideas about the value of play as you review the literature and research that has been compiled on this subject.

Trauma Informed Care [21]

Over the last few decades, we have seen an increase in childhood trauma. Many types of trauma have a lasting effect on children as they grow and develop. When we think of trauma, we may think of things that are severe; however, we know that trauma comes in small doses that are repeated over time.

There has been much research done to help identify what these adverse childhood experiences are. The compilation of research has identified some traumatic events that occur in childhood (0 – 17 years) that have an impact on children's well-being that can last into adulthood if not given the proper support to help to mitigate this trauma. Here is a list of some of the traumatic events that may impact children's mental and physical well-being: [22]

- Experiencing violence or abuse
- Witnessing violence in the home or community
- Having a family member attempt or die by suicide

Also including are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as growing up in a household with:

- Substance misuse
- Mental health problems
- Emotional abuse or neglect
- Instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison

Pause to Reflect… COVID-19 Trauma
How may COVID-10, with the disruptions, isolations, and uncertainty contribute to trauma in early childhood?

These adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness and substance abuse in adulthood, and a negative impact on educational and job opportunities.

Here are some astounding facts about ACEs:

- ACE's are common. About 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACE, and nearly 1 in 6 reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs.
- Preventing ACEs could potentially reduce a large number of health conditions. For example, up to 1.9 million cases of heart disease and 21 million cases of depression could have been potentially avoided by preventing ACEs.
- Some children are at greater risk than others. Women and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for having experienced 4 or more types of ACEs.
- ACEs are costly. The economic and social costs to families, communities, and society total hundreds of billions of dollars each year.

Trauma Informed Care is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. Trauma Informed Care also emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both consumers and providers, and helps survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

What can we do in our early childhood programs? We can help to ensure a strong start for children by:

- Creating an early learning program that supports family engagement.
- Make sure we are providing a high-quality child care experience.
- Support the social-emotional development of all children.
- Provide parenting workshops that help to promote the skills of parents.
- Use home visitation as a way to engage and support children and their families.
- Reflect on our own practices that could be unintentionally harmful to children who have experienced trauma.

What can we do in our community? As early childhood professionals, our ethical responsibilities extend to our community as well (NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, May, 2011):

- Be a part of changing how people think about the causes of ACEs and who could help prevent them.
- Shift the focus from individual responsibility to community solutions.
- Reduce stigma around seeking help with parenting challenges or for substance misuse, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
- Promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play

IN CLOSING

This chapter explored the developmental and learning theories that guide our practices with young children. This included a look at some of the classic theories that have stood the test of time, as well as, the current developmental topics to give us opportunities to think about what we can do to create the most supportive learning environment for children and their families. Learning is a complex process that involves the whole child – physically, cognitively, and affectively.

As we build upon the previous knowledge of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, Chapter 3 will provide information on the importance of observation and assessment of children in early learning environments. Hopefully, you will note that, while this course looks at the foundational knowledge and skills you need to be an effective early childhood professional, what you are learning is deeply interwoven and

connected.

Pause to Reflect… Theory Takeaway
What was the most important information that you learned from this chapter on theory and key developmental topics? Why was it most important to you and how do you plan to incorporate that information in your practices with young children and their families? When we think about what we are learning metacognitively (thinking about thinking), it helps us to make sense of that knowledge and reflect on how it pertains to us. This is a practice that will suit you well in your journey as an early childhood professional.

References

Chapter 3- The EARLY CHILDHOOD Teaching Profession

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Examine effective relationships and interactions between early childhood professionals, children, families, and colleagues, including the importance of collaboration.
- Identify professional pathways in early childhood education, including career options and professional preparation.

NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

1. Promoting Child Development and Learning
2. Building Family and Community Relationships
3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
4. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families
5. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum
6. Becoming a professional

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

Child Development and Learning

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Family and Community Engagement

Learning Environments and Curriculum

Professionalism

Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: 1.1 – 1.12

Principles 1.1 – 1.11

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals: 2.1 – 2.9

Principles: 2.1 – 2.15

Section III: Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues (it is broken into two specific responsibilities)

A – Responsibilities to coworkers

Ideals: 3A.1 – 3A.4

Principles: 3A.1 – 3A.4

B – Responsibilities to employers

Ideals: 3B.1 – I – 3B.2

Principles: 3B.1 – P – 3B.5

Section IV: Ethical Responsibility to Community and Society (we have both an individual and a collective responsibility)

Ideals: 4.1 – 4.8

Principles: 4.1 – 4.13

Preview

Pause to Reflect
What questions do you have about working with young children?

In this chapter, we will cover information about the “nuts and bolts” of working with young children that may answer some of your initial questions (and maybe spark more). In the first draft of this chapter, we invited a new teacher to write with us. What better way to get to know your roles and responsibilities than from someone who is just beginning their own journey? For this edition, we have incorporated portions of her work in this chapter, along with thoughts from other new teachers, and since the questions you reflected upon in the opening exercise probably began with one of the words in the diagram below, we will take that approach to the chapter.

Figure 3.1 – Questions to explore as you learn about the profession.

Why?

Simon Sinek encourages us to start with "why". His Ted Talk (Start with Why) [23] highlights the importance of beginning with this understanding, to help everything else fall into place. So let us start there.

?	Pause to Reflect WHY do you want to work with young children?

The way that you answered will have much to do with how you move forward. It will help you define your core beliefs about working with young children, the type of program you will feel comfortable in; how you will approach your career and the tasks you will prefer doing. Revisit your "why" often and use it wisely to guide you.

"	New Teacher Comment "The first time I watched Simon Sinek I was blown away! Whenever I am not sure how to proceed, I go back to my "why." When I went on job interviews, some places "felt" like a better place than others to work, a better "fit". I realized that was my "why" guiding me. I use "why" as a starting place for guiding behavior. I begin by listing all of the reasons a child might behave a certain way and plan from there."

While you will have an individual "why", the field of early childhood education also has a collective "why" that guides our work. Almost every profession has an organizing body that unifies its members' voices. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), established in 1926 and always evolving, is the premier professional organization for those working with young children and families. We encourage you to visit their website naeyc.org to view the many resources available to you, including articles, books, research, conferences, and position statements. Because there are so many individual "whys", rather than telling professionals specifically what to do in every situation, NAEYC has compiled two statements that broadly define our unified early childhood "why".

The first is a Code of Ethical Conduct, which lays the foundation for "why" we behave as we do are provided in the NAEYC Statement of Commitment:

As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to further the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of my ability, I will:

- Never harm children.
- Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education.
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- Respect colleagues in early childhood care and education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
- Stay informed of and maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- Engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases, and beliefs have an impact on children and families.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.
- Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. [24]

"	New Teacher Comment "I was amazed at how much I use the ethical guidelines. At least once a week I run into an issue with a child, parent, or co-worker that is not a straightforward right and wrong. This code helps me put things into perspective and handle them in a professional manner, especially as a new teacher. When a coworker approached me with juicy gossip about another coworker, I quickly informed her that if that coworker wanted me to know she would tell me herself, no need to talk behind her back. Straight from the Code of Conduct! Boom! I find these 2 documents blends nicely. When I am faced with planning curriculum, I can look at what is developmentally appropriate and then justify it further by considering it ethically. Our teaching team has found that planning by using Developmentally Appropriate Practices makes for a happy, healthy classroom of children well prepared to embrace life and learning. I whole-heartedly agree that what teachers do is the single most important factor in the classroom!"

The second set of guiding principles compiled through years of research on how young children develop and learn, lay a foundation for the general practices we use when planning, implementing, and reflecting up interactions and experiences in our programs. Again, rather than a step-by-step guide on exactly what to do in every situation, these "Developmentally Appropriate Practices" highlight the "whys" that guide what we do with young children. The content presented in this textbook is based on these principles, which include:

Practices that:

- Are appropriate to children's age and developmental stages, attuned to them as unique individuals, and responsive to the social and cultural contexts in which they live.
- Include comprehensive, effective curriculum incorporating knowledge that all domains of development interrelate.
- Embed what is known about the interrelationships and sequences of ideas, so that children's later abilities and understandings can be built on those already acquired.

- Know that both child-guided and teacher-guided experiences are vital to children's development and learning.
- Understand that rather than diminishing children's learning by reducing the time devoted to academic activities, play promotes key abilities that enable children to learn successfully.
- Hold critical that a teacher's moment-by-moment actions and interactions with children are the most powerful determinant of learning outcomes and development. Curriculum is very important, but what the teacher does is paramount.
- Ensure that for teachers are able to provide care and education of high quality, they must be well prepared, participate in ongoing professional development, and receive sufficient support and compensation.
- Realize that children are part of families and communities and that partnerships between home and school are crucial. [25]

Pause to Reflect
How does your personal WHY fit into this collective WHY?

Who?

Who are the children?

The children you will work with are as diverse as the people that work with them. Many programs are divided by age groups, so that is one way to define "who":

- Infants – from birth to about 12 months (1 year) of age
- Toddlers – from about 12 months (1 year) to 30 months (2 ½ years) of age
- Preschool – from about 2 ½ to about 5 years of age
- Pre - Kindergarten or T-Kindergarten – usually 4-5 year of age
- Kindergarten – 5 years of age
- Early Elementary (Grades 1-3) – 6-8 years of age

As you will learn in Chapter 5 (Developmental Ages and Stages), each of these ages presents very different developmental stages and teachers work with each group accordingly. Some programs focus on just one of these age groups while others may incorporate several or all of them.

Figure 3.2 – These preschool-aged children all need to feel respected, valued, and loved. [26]

The children you work with can be defined in many others way, some of which you will visit in this class, as well as other early childhood courses. Each child is unique and will come to you with their own experiences, strengths, and temperaments. Some you will connect with right away, and others you will need to stretch yourself to understand. The one thing that EVERY child you work with will have in common is the need to be respected, valued and loved. They need a safe place to trust and make connections, to feel comfortable and included. One of your primary jobs as a teacher is to connect with each child and value them as individuals.

New Teacher Comments
"My team teacher and I start each new school year generally planning for the stages of the children we will have in my classroom. Then we spend the first few weeks getting to know each individual child, focusing on making connections, and then adjust our plans accordingly.
Each new year it takes me quite a bit of time to feel comfortable with the new children. They all start out as a blur and then ever so slowly they come into focus with each bringing their own pieces to the whole picture.
At the start of the school year, I make a list of the children and take a photo. Each night when I go home, I try to make a note about at least 4 different children; personality, interests, and 2 weeks later I know so much!"

Who are their families?

Often, when we choose to work with children, we do not realize that by extension that means working with families. The younger the children, the more they are connected to the people in their home, and best practices for young children include partnerships between their two most important worlds, home and school.

Figure 3.3 – Children's families and homes are important. [27]

In Chapter 8 (Partnering with Families), we visit many aspects of working with families, so here we will simply say, just as your family is important to you and taught you many things, so too it will be for the children and families you work with. We need to conceptualize that families are a child's first teacher, and will be a strong and valuable teaching partner while their child is with us. They are entrusting us with their most prized possession and expecting that we will cherish that child as they do. A privilege indeed!

Who are the teachers?

As can be imagined, the people that are called to teaching are diverse indeed. Each brings their own set of strengths, interests, beliefs, and experiences. There is no "one right way" to teach; no magical guide you can refer to that will tell you exactly what to do in every situation. Every teacher will approach circumstances differently and this is both the joy and the trial of teaching. Your "why" will determine much of what you do. This will blend with your knowledge, experiences, and dispositional traits to guide you on your teaching journey.

Figure 3.4 – A teacher in action.

With that being said, there are some skills and traits that are helpful for high quality teachers to possess. Some of them are knowledge based and you will learn them as you complete your courses and field experiences. Time and time again we hear new teachers reflect on the importance of realizing that the early childhood classes they are taking are "job training" courses that should be valued with time spent understanding and internalizing the content rather than simply trying to pass with minimal effort to complete them.

New Teacher Comment
"In looking back, I wish someone had helped me understand that these ECE classes would be important information for my career. I hate to admit it, but so much of high school and college felt like "busy work" that I did not put in the effort I should have, and now I regret the fact that I did not learn it fully when I should have. I am going back a lot more than other teachers to relearn what I should have in classes."

This will be particularly true with experiences in the field. Most likely, at some point in your course of study, you will be expected to visit programs to observe and participate. While this can be difficult to fit into your schedule, as well as frightening to undertake, these experiences are crucial to developing your skills as a teacher. You can read and study all of the content you can, but until you actually put it into practice with real children, it cannot come to life for you. We encourage you to try as many different experiences with children as you can. Certainly, some class assignments will lend themselves to this endeavor, as will volunteer opportunities in the community. Ask your instructors or others in the field about these types of experiences. You never know what adventures await until you ask.

While your education, knowledge, and experiences will prove vital to your success as a teacher, there is another realm of traits to be considering.

Pause to Reflect
Think back to a teacher that made a positive impression in your life. What traits did that teacher possess that make them stand out to you?

Perhaps you listed some of their education or experiences, but more than likely you included some "dispositional" traits as well. Lillian Katz was one of the first to define some of the dispositions that high-quality teachers seem to possess. While some of these can be studied and developed, most occur naturally in the noted quality teachers.

High Quality Teachers
Here a list of dispositions and traits frequently noted as occurring in high quality teachers:

- Reflective
- Compassionate
- Authentic
- Supportive
- Respectful
- Encouraging
- Safe
- Trustworthy
- Positive
- Shares control
- Focuses on strengths
- High, realistic expectations
- Kind
- Patient
- Dedicated
- Knows learners
- Engages learners
- Ethical
- Growth Mindset
- Approachable
- Present [28]

Pause to Reflect
Look at the list above. What dispositional traits do you currently possess? Are there some you may not yet have, but can develop? How would you plan to develop them?

One key factor successful teachers share is the ability to continually look inward through reflection. In the yellow-green colored boxes, we have asked you to "Pause to Reflect." Why?

The Reflective Process

Learning occurs when we take risks, when we make mistakes, when we inquire, and when we experience new things. All humans are unique and process their environment from their own unique perspective. Our perspectives are informed by the interaction of nature (genetics) and nurture (environment) and both have an impact on how we process relationships with our families, our friends,

our colleagues, etc. These interactions provide us with a foundation that shapes the way we view current and future relationships. As we engage in relationships with children and their families, we use reflective practices to learn more about ourselves, including our dispositions.

As we learn more about ourselves, we have the opportunity to develop broader ways to engage in relationships with the children and families we serve. The experiences we afford children and families cannot happen without the layers of a healthy relationship. Healthy positive relationships that guide and support children are the foundation of quality teaching. Authenticity and compassion are ways of being that create supportive environments for children to flourish. The strength of a teacher's knowledge about themselves in relation to others creates opportunities for the children and families they serve to have respectful and reciprocal relationships to ensure that the child is always considered when making the multitude of decisions that are made throughout the day.

You may ask why it is so important for me to know more about myself in relation to others. As the teacher, you are the primary force in the classroom. As the quote below indicates, you, as the teacher, hold the key to creating an environment where children and their families either can flourish or diminish. Being able to value every human comes from our deep knowledge about ourselves. This is done through reflective practice.

Quotable
"I have come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized."
- Haim Ginott

Pause to Reflect
How does this quote resonate with you? Why?

We reflect in many ways, both informally and formally, in private and with others, during the experience and after, knowingly and unknowingly. All are valuable and we encourage you to try many different ways until you internalize the process that makes the most sense for you and moves you toward being an "instrument of inspiration".

Go back to the list of traits above. As you look through it again, do you notice that almost all include relationships in some way? Relationships are at the core of quality teaching.

Relationships Build Connections in the Brain

How can something as intangible as a relationship affect learning and the brain? Relationships are connection, communication, consideration. The brain is very much an active participant in recording, building, and shaping relationships. Research in human brain mapping has recognized a Neuro-Relational approach that tells us:

"Experience, not simple maturation, changes the brain (neuro)." Moreover, "all learning happens in the context of relationships (relational)." [29] When a child shows distress, a caregiver who has a proven relationship with that infant (or child) through appropriate response and respect can help the child return to a sense of calm. This is shown by tracking brain patterns of distressed children who are being monitored with brain imaging machines. The child's brain pattern also has an effect on the caregiver's brain pattern, both regulating each other. Both the child and the caregiver's stress response system synchronize and return to a frequency that is conducive to learning. [30]

The knowledge that healthy, positive, relationships are primary in creating an environment conducive to learning, helps us to structure the emotional environment with supportive and loving exchanges where children and families feel supported and appreciated. Science has shown us the link between body and mind. It has measured emotions and how different emotions affect brain waves and brain development.

We have learned that children, who experience stress, have brains that are wired to react rather than respond. Dr. Bruce Perry, a renowned psychiatrist, who has dedicated his career to the treatment of and research into childhood mental health, has spoken out about how early traumatic experiences shape the brain and what we can do to counteract the detrimental effects this has for life long mental health. The following are two recent quotes from his presentation at a conference:

"You can't access the brain without relationships."

"Lack of belonging activates the stress response. The cortex shuts down and learning can't happen. Connections are the superhighway to the cortex."

That, concisely, helps us to see the value of building relationships that help children and families have that sense of belonging that they deserve to thrive in our school environment.

Who are the other professionals supporting children?

Some of you may think you want to work in some way with children and families, but may not be sure that "teaching" is the right fit for you. Many experts will recommend starting as a teacher assistant or teacher, regardless of your later plans. That is because this experience will prove a valuable addition to whatever career you pursue in the field.

Keep in mind that "teaching" may look very different with different age groups. While the forming of relationships will lie at the core of all quality teaching, the interactions, roles, and duties will vary tremendously. We encourage you to spend some time with different age levels to get a feel for your best "fit".

Whatever age group you are working with, we encourage you to give yourself some time to get comfortable before you decide it is not for you. Teachers go through stages and in the initial stage of survival, it is difficult to discern if it is the age group, the program, or just your limited experience that is feeling overwhelming and uncomfortable.

Below is a table of the stages you can expect to go through over the years on your teaching journey:

Table 3.1 – Stages of Teaching Journey

Stage	Common Feelings	Common Needs	Advice from the Field
Survival	Fear, inadequacy, doubt, overwhelmed, exhaustion	Support, practical information and advice, understanding, a mentor or coach, resources	Hang in there We've all been there It gets easier Mistakes are learning opportunities…learn a lot
Clarity	Clearer understanding, noticing individual children and needs, a little less fear, moments of adequacy	Continued support, continued resources, a mentor or coach, encouragement to try new things,	You got this We believe in you Keep on trying Focus on what you like to do Enjoy the children
Growth	Knowledgeable, comfortable, take new risks, reflective	Support, encouragement to do things your way, reflection, team teaching	Way to go Keep growing Know your strengths Try new things Step outside your comfort zone

Mastery	Accomplished, proud, invigorated, seeking new challenges,	Branching out, mentoring or coaching others, taking on new roles and responsibilities, community connections, professional organizations	Time to support others Share your strengths Be a role model Consider advocacy Join the profession

Keep in mind that each time you begin a new endeavor (ie: teaching at a new location, new age group, new role) you will move back to survival and through the stages, although the timing may be shorter. Knowing this allows you to give yourself permission to feel the way you need to feel and seek the support you need throughout your career.

Who will be with me?

One of the wonderful aspects of our field is that you are rarely alone. In addition to the children and families, you will have colleagues who can support your journey. You may find yourself working with any or all of the following:

Table 3.2 – Who Teachers May Work With

Role	Description
Director/Manager/ Principal	Usually runs the day to day operations, oversees teaching staff, involved in hiring, provides resources and support, budgeting.
Office Staff	Keep records, handle paperwork, phone calls, administrative support.
Team Teacher / Assistant/Aide	Additional person you will collaborate with in your classroom. It's common practice to provide support for each other, offer a variety of role models for children and families, offer different strengths.
Specialists	Sometimes a specialist works in the classroom with individual children or the group. Usually providing specialized services in Occupational Therapy (OT) (life skills), Physical Therapy (PT), Speech and Language, or Behavioral intervention they may be part of the teaching team all day or for brief segments throughout the week.
Other Staff Members	From time to time, you may work with custodians, food service providers, health specialists, and others performing duties related to the classroom.
Volunteers	Family or other community members working in a variety of capacities as part of the teaching team.
College Students	From time to time college students may work in the classroom as part of their training.

In addition to the above list, we encourage you to find a mentor or coach, someone you can turn to with questions or when you need support. In the field of early childhood, many of us "pay it forward". Someone provided support for us when we were new to the field with the understanding that we would do the same when our time came. Most early childhood teachers are kind, caring professionals who want to see you succeed. Each time you succeed, our field succeeds and the children and families we work with receive the quality experiences they deserve. Ask your instructor or another resource if they know of any formal or informal mentor programs in your area.

“	New Teacher Comments Letter from a Fieldwork Student My experience is limited. I want to learn. Please don't expect perfection whenever I interact, guide behavior, lead a lesson, or do bulletin boards. Please be patient with me. My eyes have not yet been trained to see all the students in the classroom most of the time. Classroom responsibilities will always be there. I'm only with you for a short time. Please take time to explain things to me and do so willingly. My feelings are real. Please be sensitive to my needs and don't get annoyed if I ask a lot of questions and am uncertain about what to do sometimes. Treat me as you would like to be treated. I am a unique individual, like each one of your students. Please treasure my being, holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to follow, and disciplining me in a professional manner, if need be. I need your support and encouragement to grow. Pointing out what I am doing correctly and occasional praise can be reassuring and help me feel comfortable to take risks and grow. Please give me constructive feedback, focused on the things I do, without criticizing me. Please give me the freedom to make decisions and test them out as long as they don't jeopardize the well-being and safety of the students. If I fail, I can learn from my mistakes. Then I'll be better prepared to make decisions life requires of me. Please invite me to appropriate faculty meetings, seminars, workshops, parent meetings and to join educational organizations, setting a good example for me to follow. I may not be able to attend but I will appreciate your confidence in me as a future fellow professional. Sincerely, A New Fieldwork Student [31]

If you want to work with children and families, but are not sure teaching is for you, there are many other career options you are encouraged to explore.

Career options in Early Childhood Education and Child Development

Area	Careers
Child Development Focus	• Teacher Aide • Assistant Teacher* • Associate Teacher* • Teacher* • Master Teacher* • Site Supervisor* • Program/Center Director* • Early Childhood Special Education Teacher** • Curriculum Coordinator** • Infant Specialist • School Age Specialist • Owner/Operator of an Early Childhood Program • Licensed Family Child Care Provider
Elementary Settings	• Instructional Aide • Credentialed Teacher** • Transitional Kindergarten Teacher** • Early Childhood Special Education Teacher** • Afterschool Program Staff • Afterschool Program Coordinator

Adult Education and Training	• Child Development Trainer** • Community College Instructor** • Infant/Toddler Certified Trainer** • Parent Educator** • Vocational Educational Instructor**
Community and Social Services	• Parks and Recreation Aide • Parks and Recreation Program Supervisor • School age Enrichment Program Staff/Leader • Child Life Specialist** • Community Care Licensing Analyst • Family Services Advocate • Resource and Referral Specialist • Early Intervention Specialist** • Home Visitor • Project/Program Administrator in Child Related Agencies** • Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist** • City/County Child Care Coordinator**
Other Related Work Options	• Child Development Researcher** • Child Care and Development Consultant • Playground Designer • Sales/Marketing for Early Education Materials • Child and Family Public Policy Specialist • Pediatric Nurse** • Pediatrician** • Family Therapist**

*Refers to the levels on the Child Development Permit Matrix

**These positions usually require a bachelor's degree and additional training

What?

What does that mean?

Like most fields, early childhood has terminology that it is helpful to know. Here is a "starter" list to get you started:

- ECE (Early Childhood Education) and CD (Child Development): often used interchangeably to reflect the science and study of how young children develop and learn.
- Chronological: actual age of a child (or adult) based on their date of birth.
- Program, Site, Center, School: all terms used to reflect early childhood educational locations.
- Pre-K (Pre-Kindergarten and T-K (Transitional-Kindergarten): programs for children the year before they begin kindergarten.
- Teacher: a person who facilitates learning. Sometimes used as a specific label based on educational criteria and other times used more broadly to include all people in a child's life who facilitate that child's development and learning.
- Reflection: a growth mindset focusing on divergent thinking and analysis.
- Divergent thinking; brainstorming or broadly thinking of many solutions
- Convergent thinking: narrowing thoughts to one answer
- Whole Child: looking at all aspects of a child (physical, cognitive, emotional and social)
- Domains of development: a way of labeling the various aspects of a "whole child" (defined further in Chapter 5)
- Observation: the primary means of understanding the children we work with to plan appropriate interactions and experiences (defined further in Chapter 4)
- (DAP) Developmentally Appropriate Practices

	New Teacher Comment "I was so confused at first by all of the terms and the use of letters (acronyms) in my classes and at work. At first, I didn't ask because I thought I should know them all but this just made me less effective. When I finally got over myself and adopted this phrase "I should probably know, but what exactly does that mean?" I was amazed at how helpful people were at explaining. I started a list (part of which is shared above) and pretty soon I was the one sharing what terms meant with other people. This was particularly helpful for me to remember when talking with parents; they don't know either and can be very intimidated (like I was) to ask."

What responsibilities will I have?

Preschool teachers play a central role in ensuring the preschool program is of high quality. They bring a wide range of skills and qualities to the job of guiding young children's learning and development. Since one of them is constantly reflecting, we thought it might be helpful for you to see the basic teacher responsibilities through the lens of a teacher evaluation. Evaluations are a formal way that teachers can assess their strengths and areas for continued growth. The way teachers are evaluated will vary tremendously, but in some way, teachers should be engaging in ongoing reflection on the following core classroom responsibilities.

COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS ECE PRACTICUM

FINAL REFLECTION & FEEDBACK [32]

RATING SCALE

(Please enter a score of 1-5 in each box below to reflect the following):

When calculating scores please consider both effort (process) and outcome (product)

1 2 3 4 5

Need more effort or experience Adequate Mastery

Student Teacher

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES		

Attendance

Arrives promptly and does not leave early

Dresses appropriately

Appears eager to learn

Maintains ethical code of conduct

Learns classroom routine

Has a positive attitude

Uses appropriate language in speaking and writing

Shows initiative

Completes work on time

Balances observation and participation appropriately

Works as part of teaching team

Reflects on and evaluates own behavior and actions

Responds appropriately to feedback and suggestions

Demonstrates respect for all

Is aware of self as role model

Takes safe risks and learns from mistakes

Student Teacher

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		

Appears comfortable around children

Learns and uses children's names

Treats children with kindness and respect

Listens carefully to what children say

Responds with interest, concern, and care

Uses nonverbal communication effectively (body language, facial expressions, down to their level,…)

Uses verbal communication effectively (voice, volume, tone, open-ended, multiple bounces,…)

Interacts positively with individual children

Interacts positively with small groups of children

Interacts positively with large group of children

Adapts to children's individual needs and styles

Understands developmentally appropriate practices

Is informed by observations of child

Encourages development of the "whole child"

Supports peer interactions

Fosters problem solving

Is alert to total classroom dynamics

Shows patience and understanding with conflict

Uses a variety of appropriate guidance strategies

Overall appears to enjoy time with children

Student Teacher

RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS		

Appears comfortable around adults

Learns and uses adult's name

Treats adults with kindness and respect

Uses nonverbal and verbal communication appropriately and frequently

Asks for information/support as needed

Keeps team members informed of incidents/concerns

Finds ways to support and be part of teaching team

Shows respect for parents and family members of the children in the class

Understands the important role families play in children's lives

Maintains confidentially and professionalism

Student Teacher

SEGMENTS OF ROUTINE AND CURRICULUM		

Arrival and greeting of children and families

Self-care of children (handwashing, toileting, tooth brushing,…)

Nutrition (meal planning, meal prep, feeding, clean up,…)

Large Group Time (reading books, telling stories, singing songs, movement activities, transitions, fingerplays, chants, attention getters, group management, modifying for children's interests in the moment, leading and extending discussions, other)

Inside Time areas and activities (Dramatic Play, Block Play, Science & Math, fine motor, gross motor, other)

Outside Time areas and activities

Dismissal and farewell f children and families

Student Teacher

CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION		

Understands classroom flow and procedures

Tries new experiences in various classroom duties

Aware of goals of program in planning

Understands age group, abilities, and interests

Creates opportunities for children to make choices and learn

Supports the theory that children learn through play

Works effectively with teacher in planning process

Understands planning based on children's interests and development

Shows skill in preparing written lesson plan

Plans for children's involvement in their own learning

Implements activities appropriately

Shows flexibility in adapting activities as needed

Reflects on children's response to activities

Reflection indicates learning from the experience

Documents learning effectively

Comfortable implementing activities

Pause to Reflect
Look through the responsibilities above. Which do you think will be the easiest for you to master? The most difficult? Why?

Teaching is a process. We learn more as we practice the art of teaching. Malcolm Gladwell, in his book. "The Tipping Point," says that in order to be an expert at something, you need to spend 10,000 hours doing it. [33] That is quite a long time! Factor in all of the informal teaching that you have done over your lifetime and you still can see that it will take some time to master the skills above and move to the "Mastery" stage of teaching.

In addition to the classroom skills mentioned above, teachers take on a variety of other roles informally that you may not think of right away. These may include:

- Nurse
- Janitor
- Researcher
- Cook
- Interior Designer
- Graphic Designer
- Counselor
- Artist
- Plumber
- Interpreter
- Reporter
- Mediator
- Student
- Performer
- Cheerleader

Pause to Reflect
Look through the additional roles above. Which makes sense for you? Which need further clarification? Can you think of others to add?

New Teacher Comment
"I am surprised each day by the many roles I play. I am glad I am open to trying new things and chipping in where needed. Quality teaching is a team effort in all regards, even if it means plunging the toilet when a child flushes a wooden block and the custodian isn't available."

As mentioned earlier, a key way we reflect is through on-going assessments. These are meant less of a "test of performance on evaluation day" and more of an ongoing feedback opportunity.

Assessment affords us the following:

- A key to gaining the knowledge and skills needed to continually grow and change as early childhood professionals.
- The opportunity to address specific goals and how those goals will improve your teaching.
- A feedback loop that is sometimes referred to as "appreciative inquiry."

Part of the process of becoming an early childhood professional is having a growth mindset. That means that you are able and willing to hear the feedback from others and integrate that feedback through inquiry and reflection. You can hear that feedback in the spirit it is given – for growth.

During the beginning of your career as an early childhood professional, you may engage with a coach, who is often a part of the staff at your program that can help you to improve your knowledge and skills. One of the best ways for someone to coach you is to look at your strengths and to support you with your challenges. Judy Jablon, the author of Coaching with Powerful Interactions , shares about the importance of strength-based coaching. Here is an example of what that may look like:

You have asked your lead teacher to record you reading to a large group of children. Of course, you are nervous, but you trust your lead teacher to be honest and to provide feedback for growth. Later that day, you meet together to discuss together what you both see on the recording. After you both view the recording, your lead teacher begins the discussion:

Lead Teacher : What do you think about this after viewing the recording?

You : I could tell that I was nervous at the beginning, but once the children were engaged, a sense of calm came over me, and I felt pretty good about it.

Lead Teacher : Do you see any areas where you can grow and if so, what advice would you like from me?

You : One of the areas that I struggled with is allowing the children to freely express themselves as I was reading. I notice that you are much more comfortable with that when you read to the children. I would love to read with the ease that you do.

Lead Teacher : Thank you for noticing. Feeling the ease that you mention took a lot of time and guidance with the help of a coach during my early years of teaching. What she taught me with patience and compassion was really a gift. A gift that I am able to share with new teachers.

You : I would like to review the recording a bit more and then try it again next week. I plan to practice reading the book to see if that will give me more comfort. Thank you for being supportive and kind. I appreciate our work together.

New Teacher Comment
“I get very nervous for assessments but they end up being very helpful.
I have started doing “self-assessments” of myself a lot and it helps to be prepared when my director comes to do my formal one.
Although I feel very uncomfortable doing it, I am finding that videoing myself and watching it is the best way for me to get a true picture of my teaching.”

What is a Professional Portfolio?
If an assessment can give you a snapshot of your strengths, imagine what an entire collection can do? That is the essence of a professional portfolio. It is a compilation of all of your strengths, a “brag book” if you will. Most teachers will use a 3 ring notebook or e-portfolio to house their resume, certificates, immunizations, letters of recommendations and samples of their professional work (activity plans, photos, work samples, resources, newsletters, etc.) and professional statements about important concepts (philosophy, core beliefs, best practices, etc.) These can be from classes, work-related endeavors, community service, anywhere that highlights your skills. We encourage you to begin collecting items now and add them often.

New Teacher Comment
“I get so many compliments on my professional portfolio. I decorated it to reflect me and use it often. I brought it on interviews, set it out at Open House, and keep it in my work area to add to often.
I was so nervous in my interviews that I was glad I had my portfolio to show. I found it helped with talking points and helped me show my work better than if I had just explained it. For one interview, I was so nervous that I just walked in, said “hi” and handed them the portfolio. They were impressed and I got the job!”

New Teacher Comments – Advice as you begin your journey

- At the beginning, I felt overwhelmed. It gets better!
- Go to your site's website and learn about their philosophy and school. It helps give an understanding of why they do what they do.
- Always plan ahead and stay on top of things!
- Smile and enjoy the experience. This is what you want to do.
- Get to know the children and your coworkers as soon as you can.
- Intimidating at first, but you will feel comfortable after a while.
- Visit a few times before you start to see how they dress and do things.
- Jump in as soon as you feel comfortable and do things early.
- Feel comfortable to talk about any questions or concerns.
- Observe as much as you can. Come early and stay late if needed.
- Choose your site carefully.
- Step out of your comfort zone.
- Communication is the key!
- Be flexible
- Go back to your previous class materials; it will help a lot
- View your “mistakes” as learning opportunities and always grow from them!
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions
- Ask for feedback
- Pay it forward when you can
- Find out procedures right away (time card, belongings, lunch,…)
- Don’t expect perfection from yourself or others
- Support others and they will do the same for you
- Begin a resource file and keep adding to it

Pause to Reflect
What advice stands out for you? Why? How will you use it?

When?

When are most programs open?

There are many different types of programs and the hours of operation, as well as options for attendance, vary. In general, you will find that most programs will operate some or all of the days between Monday and Friday. Typical program hours include:

- Full Day: Monday – Friday from early morning (6 or 7 am) through evening (5 to 7 pm)
- Half Day: Monday-Friday either morning or afternoon.
- Part Days: Usually 2 or 3 days Monday-Friday
- Before and after school programs for elementary school children usually follow a Full Day schedule when the children are not in school
- Most full day programs will include a rest time for children, most half days will not.

- There may be very few programs with evening or weekend options, but the traditional workweek is still the majority of when programs operate.

When will I be working?

If you define a career as one's life work, and a job as something you do to make money during designated hours, working with children will most definitely be a career .

Inside the Classroom

As seen in the assessment earlier in this chapter, early childhood professionals take on a variety of tasks inside the classroom. During the workday, teachers will be expected to:

- Carefully plan the classroom environment.
- Plan interactions and intentional learning experiences.
- Create warm, respectful relationships with children and families.
- Know how to handle conflict with others.
- Plan a consistent, yet flexible daily routine.
- Extend children's development and learning.
- Acknowledge and support children's accomplishments.
- Respond, instead of reacting.
- Find meaningful ways to communicate and collaborate with families.
- Be a positive role model.
- Advocate for children and families.
- Maintain an environment that supports health, safety, and nutrition.
- Collaborate with team teachers and other colleagues
- Attend staff meetings
- Adhere to ethical practices

Outside the Classroom

There will also be a variety of tasks to perform outside of the classroom. These will include:

- Preparing materials
- Researching topics
- Collecting resources
- Attending workshops and conferences
- Joining and participating in professional organizations
- Developing relationships with community resources and advocacy
- Continuing your education

New Teacher Comments
" I now understand the sign that sits on my directors' desk, 'A TEACHER'S WORK IS NEVER DONE.'"
"I'm learning that as a new teacher I am spending much of my time outside of work preparing materials for my class. My friends joke about how I now look at any item to figure out how I might use it. The other day I asked them to save their toilet paper rolls and they laughingly agreed."
"When teachers aren't with their classes, they are thinking about their classes."

Pause to Reflect
Was this what you were expecting? Why or why not?

When should I become more involved than just taking classes?

Because a career in early childhood education is multifaceted, taking classes is a necessary and beneficial start. So is volunteering whenever you can to gain experience. In addition, we encourage you to jump in and get as involved as you like in the profession. Perhaps you want to join attend a workshop or conference? Perhaps you want to join an organization.

As mentioned throughout the course, the "mother ship" of early childhood professionals is the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We mention them again here as a resource for your professional growth and development. Many high quality programs and teachers adhere to their standards and are members of this organization.

While NAEYC is the primary organization for Early Childhood Professionals (naeyc.org), other organizations support our field as well. Here are a few of them:

- Child Care Exchange
- California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAAEYC is an affiliate of NAEYC)
- Council for Professional Development
- Professional Association for Children
- Children's Defense Fund
- National Head Start Association
- World Association of Early Educators
- National Child Care Association
- High Scope
- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

There are many more, but this is just a taste of how rich the field is in supporting children and families and the practitioners that serve them.

We also encourage you to "look local". Many community colleges offer clubs and organizations on campus that may feel more comfortable to start with. At College of the Canyons, you may want to look into TEACH or the Future Educators Club. Contact TEACH@canyons.edu to get started.

New Teacher Comments
"I am so happy I found our campus education club. I enjoy the meetings and have met so many people. I actually heard about my job through someone at a meeting who mentioned her program was hiring.
I attended my first workshop and was blown away. I learned so much and had so much fun. I'm definitely signing up for more!"

You might also consider exploring the California (CA) Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Registry: https://www.caregistry.org .The “Registry” is a web-based system designed to track and promote the employment, training, and education accomplishments of the early care and education ECE teachers and providers.

Pause to Reflect
What suggestions might you pursue to get “more involved” in the field?

Where?

Where do early childhood programs take place?

In Chapter 6 (Curriculum) and Chapter 7 (Learning Environments), you will be introduced to different types of programs, which sometimes determines where they occur. For now, here is a list of the most common places for young children to develop and grow:

- The child’s home - this is often a child’s first classroom and many important skills are developed here
- Someone else’s home - often-called home daycare or family childcare, there are a variety of types of programs that are run inside caregivers' homes.
- A church, synagogue, or similar establishment - often built for their own programs that take place on the weekends, these are empty during the week and can accommodate multiple uses. Programs operating in such locations may or may not be affiliated with the establishment that owns the building.
- A school setting - either specifically designed for the age group served or modified to meet the needs of various ages.
- A park or community center – some community spaces are dedicated to serving children in a variety of ways.
- Online - synchronously (at the same time) or asynchronously (at different times independently)

New Teacher Comments
“In my practicum class, I was surprised to learn about all of the different places we could train. I thought a school setting was the only place, but there were so many wonderful options.
COVID 19 meant that our in-person program needed to be moved to an online format. Some teachers got really creative with Zoom, Google Classroom, video chats, and other technology. One of my colleagues started with show and tell where she had each child in the class take a turn sharing whatever they wanted about their home. We saw bedrooms, favorite toys and met so many pets and family members. It was a wonderful way to connect!
Interviewing different places I learned that it is not the building but what goes on inside and outside that makes the magic happen.”

Where do I go to get more involved?

The resources above in the “When” section are a great place to get started. Ask your instructor if you would like to inquire further.

How?

As stated above, there are many careers related to working with children and families. Since many of you will look into teaching at some point in your early childhood career, let us take a closer look at how that might happen.

As you hone many of the interpersonal traits and dispositions needed, you will also be taking classes to complete the formal education necessary to meet program requirements. This link will take you to our department website where you are able to find more information specific to your early childhood studies here at College of the Canyons, including your needed coursework and valuable academic information.

Professional Pathways

The field of Early Childhood Education has multiple pathways for those who are interested in directly or indirectly working with children and families. This section will explore the education needed to become an early childhood professional, career options, and continuation of education and professional development.

Education

There are many entrance points along the career path in Early Childhood Education. The following pathways are to be used for those who are seeking employment in the State of California. Each state has different requirements and since this text originated in California for the students at College of the Canyons, we will speak specifically for our students and our state.

Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)

While the CDA has been around for 45 years, this is most recognized in states that do not have comprehensive higher education systems in Child Development or Early Childhood Education. Here is some key information taken directly from the CDA website:

- The CDA is based on a core set of competency standards, which guide early care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children.
- The Council works to ensure that the nationally transferable CDA is a credible and valid credential, recognized by the profession as a vital part of professional development.
- CDAs have knowledge of how to put the CDA Competency Standards into practice and understanding of why those standards help children move with success from one developmental stage to another. CDAs know how to nurture the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development of children. [34]

For those who hold a CDA Credential, in California, it can be used in the following ways in California:

- Earn your California Child Development Associate Teacher Permit (see permit matrix option 2 under Associate Teacher)
- You can use them as transferable units to a higher education program of study to continue with the additional units you would need to work in a state-funded early education center

Associates Degree for Transfer (ADT) in Early Childhood Education and/or Certificates of Achievement

The California Community College System, to which College of the Canyons belongs, offers several options in the Early Childhood course of study. You can earn an associate’s degree, which requires that you complete 24 specific units of ECE along with the general education requirements of an associate’s degree. The Associate’s Degree you earn at College of the Canyons is a transfer degree, which means that with your degree, you will be accepted at a California State University and you would enter as a junior (provided that you are continuing your education in either Child Development or a related field).

You also can earn one or more of the certificates of specialization that we currently offer for our students. Currently, those certificates include specializations in:

- Preschool – this is one that you can earn along with your ADT, as it requires all of the courses that you took for your ADT.
- Infant-Toddler
- School – Age
- Special Education
- Supervision and Administration of Children’s Programs

It is helpful to make an appointment with a counselor to ensure that you are taking the right courses for general education as well as map out your course of study. It is also important that you speak with the Early Childhood Education department to gain a better understanding of the specific eight courses you need to take to earn your degree or certificate and to follow the suggestions of taking them in order.

Our course of study at College of the Canyons:

- ECE 100 Principles and Practices of Early Childhood Education (this is the class you are currently enrolled in)
- ECE 101 Child Growth and Development
- ECE 102 Child, Family, and Community
- ECE 103 Observation and Assessment
- ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education
- ECE 105 Health, Safety, and Nutrition in Early Childhood Education
- ECE 106 The Role of Equity and Diversity in Early Childhood Education
- ECE 200 Practicum – Field Experience

The following three courses require prior coursework that must be completed with a passing grade before enrollment (called pre-requisites):

- ECE 103 Observation and Assessment requires ECE 100
- ECE 104 Curriculum for Young Children also requires ECE 100
- ECE 200 Practicum/Field Experience requires ECE 100, 101, 102, 103, and 104

We provide this information so you can plan your schedule accordingly should you want to complete your degree in 2 years. Taking them in chronological order is the best strategy when possible, as the information and experiences build upon each other.

Bachelor's Degree

Several institutions of Higher Education offer Bachelor's degrees for those pursuing a career in working with children. In-state, those institutions can be California State Universities (CSU's), University of California (UC's), or private institutions. One of the best ways to choose an institution is to find one that meets your financial needs and the needs you have as a student to be successful.

Master's Degree

As indicated above, the same is true for Master's Degrees. Again, it is best to find an institution that will work best for you and your career goals.

Doctoral Degree

Fewer higher education institutions offer doctoral degrees in Child Development/Early Childhood Education. However, in the state of California, a group of higher education faculty is currently working with institutions to offer this degree. We know from this study - Transforming the Workforce 0 – 8 , that the more knowledge a practitioner has about how children grow and develop, the more prepared that practitioner is to provide high quality environments that are supportive and responsive to the needs of children and their families.

Child Development Permit

In response to the implementation of state-subsidized preschool, California developed a permit structure that details what the personnel at each level are authorized to do and the education and experience requirements for those levels. The current six-level permit structure is based upon a career ladder approach with each level increasing in coursework preparation and commensurate authorization or responsibility. Please see the Appendix for the Permit Matrix. Most coursework is completed by candidates at community colleges. [35]

New Teacher Comments
When I started my first ECE class I thought I would get my degree, get a job, and be done. Now I know that was just the start. To be a good teacher is to be a lifelong learner.
Don't be afraid to join organizations and go to workshops and conferences. I was petrified to go to my first one, but it was so much fun. I learned a lot that I could instantly take back to my classroom and met so many new and helpful people.
Find a more seasoned teacher or someone you feel comfortable with. You will have many questions and need a sounding board. Later, when you know more, you can 'pay it forward' with another new teacher.

Pause to Reflect
What will help you as you begin your journey into the world of Early Childhood Education? What advice might you have for others as they begin their own journey?

In Closing

In this chapter, we visited various aspects of the early childhood teaching profession. We focused on clarifying your "why", who the children, families, and teachers are, what is needed to be a successful early childhood professional, when to get started, where to access information and how to become the best professional you can be.

We focused on many questions throughout this chapter. The remaining chapters will focus on "how". In Chapter 4 (Observation and Assessment), you will discover how to meaningfully observe and assess children in order to provide quality learning experiences and environments that meet their individual and group needs.

Contributing Author to this Chapter

Nikki Savage

References

Chapter 4 – Observation, Documentation, & Assessment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop observational skills that will form the foundation of working effectively with young children.

NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

Standard 3 : Observing, documenting, and assessing to support young children and families.

Standard 6 : Becoming a professional

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

The following competencies are addressed in this chapter:

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Professionalism

- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance
- Special Needs and Inclusion

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: – I-1.1-, I-1.2, I-1.3, I-1.6, I-1.7, I-1.10

Principles: P-1.1, P-1.2, P-1.4, P-1.5, P-6, P-1.7,

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals: I-2.1, I-2.2, I-2.3, I-2.4, I-2.5, I-2.6, I-2.7, I-2.8

Principles: P-2.4, P-2.6, P-2.7, P-2.8, P-2.12, P-2.13

Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues (Co-Workers and Employers)

Ideals: I-3A.3, I-3B.1

Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Ideals: I-4.1, I-4.2, I-4.5

Preview

As discussed in chapter 2, the field of early care and education relies on developmental and learning theories to guide our practices. Not only do theories help us to better understand a child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs, theories help us to see each child as a unique learner and can also help us to set appropriate expectations. With the information we uncover by watching and listening to children, we can provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities so they can thrive. In this chapter, we will examine how observation techniques are used to connect theory principles to practical applications. In other words, we will explore how teachers can incorporate observation, documentation, and assessment into their daily routines in order to effectively work with children and their families.

In the field of early care and education, the pursuit of high-quality care is a top priority. Throughout the day, preschool teachers have numerous tasks and responsibilities. In addition to providing a safe and nurturing environment, teachers must plan effective curriculum, assess development, decorate the classroom, stock the shelves with age-appropriate materials, and they must develop respectful relationships with children and their families. So you might be wondering, what does this all have to do with observation, documentation, and assessment? To effectively support a child's development and to help them thrive, preschool teachers are expected to be accountable and intentional with every interaction and experience. Let's take a closer look and examine how teachers utilize observation, documentation, and assessment to maintain a high-quality learning environment.

Pause to Reflect
How would you define observation? Compare your definition to the one below.
According to Gordon and Browne (2016) "Observing is more than ordinary supervision. It takes energy and concentration to become an accurate observer." [36] It also takes time and practice to learn how to distinguish the difference between trivial details and detailed data. Once teachers master objective observation techniques and they can recognize their own biases , they are ready to conduct purposeful observations and support children's play, learning, growth, and development.

THE PURPOSE of OBSERVATION

Regular and systematic observations allow us to reflect on all aspects of our job as early childhood educators. To ensure high-quality practices we should observe the program environment, the interactions between the children and teachers, and each child's development. With the information we gather from on-going observations we can:

- Improve teaching practices
- Plan curriculum
- Assess children's development
- Partner with families

Let's review each concept more closely to better understand why we observe .

To Improve Teaching Practices

As we watch and listen to children throughout the day, we begin to see them for who they are. With each interaction and experience, we can see how children process information and how they socialize with their peers. We can learn so much about a child if we take the time to watch, listen, and record on a daily basis. Teachers are sometimes influenced by their own ideas of how children should behave. Truth be told, everything passes through a filter that is based on the observer's beliefs, cultural practices, and personal experiences. As observers, we must be aware that our own biases can impact our objectivity. To gain perspective and to be most effective, we must train ourselves to slow down and step back, we must try to focus on what the child is actually doing, rather than judging how they are doing it or assuming why they are doing it. To practice becoming more objective, imagine you are a camera taking snapshots of key moments. As you observe the children in your care - practice recording just the facts. [37]

To Plan Effective Curriculum

When I was a teacher some years ago, I planned activities and set up the environment based on my interests and ideas of what I thought children should be learning. Today I realize that optimal learning occurs when curriculum reflects the children's interests. To uncover their interests, teachers need to observe each child as an individual, in addition to observing both small and large group interactions. Let's look at the curriculum cycle to examine best practices in how to use observation to plan effective curriculum.

Figure 3.1 Reflection. [38]

Reflect

Reflective Practice is at the center of the curriculum planning cycle. Reflective practice helps us to consider our caregiving practices and to develop greater self-awareness so we can be more sensitive and responsive to the children we care for. As we look, listen, and record the conversations and interactions of each child, we are collecting valuable insight. With each observation, we are learning specific details about the children's interests and abilities, their play patterns, social behaviors, problem-solving skills, and much, much more. With the information we gather, we can reflect on our caregiving practices and look at what we are doing well in addition to where we can improve. To ensure best practices, we can think about how we can become more responsive and how we can meet each child where they are in order to best support their individual needs. Reflective practice can be done alone or with co-workers - if you are team teaching. To create an inclusive learning environment that engages each child in meaningful ways, here are some prompts to help you begin reflecting on your practices:

- look at the space, materials, and daily schedule;
- Consider the cultural diversity of families;
- Think about whether or caregiving routines are meaningful;
- Think about how you are fostering relationships with families
- Consider if you are using a "one size fits all" approach
- Think about if your expectations for children match up with the age and stage of their development
- Reflect on how you are guiding children's behavior

Let's take a closer look at how the cycle works to help us plan and implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Observe

To gather useful information about each child, we must first remember to use an objective lens . In other words, rather than assuming you know what a child is thinking or doing, it is important to learn the art of observing. To gather authentic evidence, we must learn how to look and listen with an open mind. We must learn to "see" each child for who they are rather than for who we want them to be or who we think they should be. Be assured, learning to be an objective observer is a skill that requires patience and practice. As you begin to incorporate observation into your daily routine, here are a few things to think about:

1. Who should I observe? Quite simply - every child needs to be observed. Some children may stand out more than others, and you may connect to certain children more than others. In either case, be aware and be mindful to set time aside to observe each child in your care.
2. When should I observe? It is highly suggested that you observe at various times throughout the day – during both morning and afternoon routines. Some key times may include during drop-off and pick-up times, during planned or teacher-directed activities, during open exploration or child-initiated activities. You may have spontaneous observations - which are special moments or interactions that unexpectedly pop up, and you may have planned observations - which are scheduled observations that are more focused around collecting evidence about a particular skill set, interaction, or behavior.
3. Where should I observe? You should observe EVERYWHERE! Because children can behave differently when they are indoors as compared to when they are outdoors, it's important to capture them interacting in both settings.
4. What should I observe? To understand the "whole child" you need to observe their social interactions, their physical development, how they manage their emotions and feelings, how they problem-solve when tasked with new developmental skills, how they communicate with their peers and adults, and how they use materials and follow directions. In other words – EVERYTHING a child does and says! In addition to observing each child as an individual, it's important to look at small group interactions, along with large group interactions.
5. How should I observe? To capture all the various moments, you need to know when to step in and when to step back. Sometimes we quietly watch as moments occur, and sometimes we are there to ask questions and prompt (or scaffold) children's learning. Sometimes we can record our observations at that moment as they occur, and sometimes we have to wait to jot down what we heard or saw at a later time.

Document

As we observe, we must record what we see and hear exactly as it happens. There are several tools and techniques that can be used to document our observations. As you continue along the Early Childhood Education / Child Development pathway, you may take a class on "Observation and Assessment" which will provide you with detailed information on how to effectively document a child's development. As for now, we will take a brief look at some of the tools and techniques you may want to use as part of your daily routine.

Figure 3.2 Documenting what you observe is an important part of the process. [39]

Tools to Use In Your Daily Routine

Running Record

To gather authentic evidence of everything you see and hear a child doing during a specific timeframe, you can use a running record . The primary goal of using a running record is to "obtain a detailed, objective account of behavior without inference, interpretations, or evaluations". According to Bentzen, you will know you have gathered good evidence when you can close your eyes and you can "see" the images in your mind as they are described in your running record. [40]

Anecdotal Record

Whereas a running record can be used to gather general information more spontaneously, anecdotal records are brief, focused accounts of a specific event or activity. An anecdotal record is "an informal observation method often used by teachers as an aid to understanding the child's personality or behavior." [41] Anecdotal records, also referred to as "anecdotal notes," are direct observations of a child that offer a window of opportunity to see into a child's actions, interactions, and reactions to people and events. They are an excellent tool that provides you with a collection of narratives that can be used to showcase a child's progress over time.

Developmental Checklists

To track a child's growth development and development in all of the developmental domains including physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional you will want to use a developmental checklist. With a checklist, you can easily see what a child can do, as well as note the areas of development that need further support. Teachers can create their own checklists based on certain skill sets, or to look at a child's full range of development they can download a formal developmental milestone checklist from a reputable source (e.g., the CDC Developmental Milestones (https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/...checklists.pdf). Checklists can be used to track a large group of children or an individual child.

Frequency Counts

To gather information about a child's interests, social interactions, play patterns, and temperamental traits you can use a frequency count chart. As you observe the children at play, a tally mark is made every time the noted behavior or action occurs within a set timeframe. Frequency counts are also used to track undesirable or challenging behaviors, as well as prosocial behaviors.

Work Samples

Creating a work sample requires more effort than hanging a child's picture on the wall. A work sample provides tangible evidence of a child's effort, progress, and achievement. Not only does a work sample highlight the final product , but it can also highlight the process. To collect authentic evidence , with every work sample you need to include the date and a brief caption that explains the child's learning experience.

Documentation Boards

In addition to using the above tools and techniques to record observations, teachers can use documentation boards or panels to highlight the learning activities that are happening throughout the week, month, and year. Not only do families enjoy seeing their child's work posted, but children can also be empowered by seeing all that they have accomplished. Documentation boards are another great way to validate progress over time. Documentation boards can be made with the children as a project or can be assembled by the teacher or parent volunteer. Typically, documentation boards are posted on the wall for all to see and they usually showcase the following information:

- Learning goal and objectives
- Children's language development
- The process and complete project
- The milestones of development
- Photos with detailed captions

?	Pause to Reflect What might be pros and cons of each of the above tools for documenting your observations? Do you have any experience with any of them (as a teacher, family member, or child/student)?

Interpret

After you have captured key evidence, you must now make sense of it all. In other words, you must try to figure out what it all means. As you begin to analyze and interpret your documentation, you will want to compare your current observations to previous observations. As you compare observations, you will want to look for play patterns and track social interactions. You will also want to look for changes in behavior and look for possible triggers (antecedents) when addressing challenging behaviors.

Lastly, you will want to note any new milestones that have developed since the last observation. To help you analyze and interpret your observation data, you will want to ask yourself some reflective questions. Here are some suggested questions:

- What have I learned about this child?
- What are their current interests – who do they play with and what activity centers or areas do they migrate to the most?
- Has this child developed any new skills or mastered any milestones?
- How did this child approach new activities or problem-solve when faced with a challenge?
- How long does the child usually stay focused on a task?
- Is this behavior "typical" for this child?
- *What can I plan to support and encourage this child to progress along at a developmentally appropriate pace?

Another vital step in interpreting your observations is to reflect and connect your observation data to developmental theories. ECE theories provide foundational principles that we use to guide our practices and plan developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Plan

Once you have interpreted your observation data (asked questions, looked for patterns, noted any changes in growth and development) and you have analyzed theory principles, it is time to plan curriculum. First, let's define curriculum . According to Epstein (2007), c urriculum is "the knowledge and skills teachers are expected to teach and children are expected to learn, and the plans for experiences through which learning will take place (p. 5). I would like to define curriculum as "the activities, experiences, and interactions a child may have throughout their day." Curriculum supports learning and play and it influences a whole child's growth and development. As teachers set goals and make plans, they should consider that some curriculum will be planned, while some curriculum will emerge. As you plan your curriculum, you are encouraged to think about the following aspects of curriculum – the environment, materials, and interactions. For example,

- How is the environment set up – is it overstimulating, cluttered, or inviting and well organized?
- What is the mood and tone of the classroom – is it calm or chaotic? Do the children appear happy and engaged? Have you interacted with the children?
- Are there enough materials available – are children having to wait long periods of time for items and are there conflicts because of limited materials ?
- Do the materials reflect the children's interests - are they engaging and accessible?
- What are the social interactions - who is playing with whom, are there social cliques, is anyone playing alone?
- Are the activities appropriate - do they support development in all areas of learning?
- Are there a variety of activities to encourage both individualized play and cooperative play ? [42]

Implementation

Probably the more joyful part of our job is implementing curriculum and seeing the children engage in new activities. It is common to hear teachers say that the highlight of their day is "seeing the lightbulb go on" as children make valuable connections to what the teacher has planned and as the children master new skill sets. An important part of implementation is understanding differentiated instruction . According to Gordon and Browne (2016) when teachers can implement activities and materials to match the interests and skill level of each child, they are utilizing developmentally appropriate practices. For light bulbs to go off, intentional teachers must remember to "tailor what is taught to what a child is ready and willing to learn."

Evaluate

Once you have planned your curriculum, gathered your materials, set up your environment, and implemented your activities, you will need to observe, document, and interpret the interactions so that you can evaluate and plan for the next step. Based on whether the children mastered the goals, expectations, and met the learning outcomes will determine your next step. For example, if the children can quickly and easily complete the task, you may have to consider adding more steps or extending the activity to challenge the children. If some children were unable to complete the task or appeared uninterested, you may consider how to better scaffold their learning either through peer interactions or by redefining the steps to complete the activity. As you evaluate your implemented activities here are some questions that you want to think about:

- How did the child approach the activity and how long did the child stay engaged?
- What problem-solving strategies did the child use?
- Did the child follow the intended directions or find alternative approaches?
- Who did the child interact with?

Based on your answers, you will decide on what is in the child's best interest and how to proceed moving forward.

Figure 3.3 Evaluating the curriculum you implement helps you decide how to move forward. [43]

To Assess Children's Development

Early childhood educators use assessments to showcase critical information about a child's growth and development. As suggested by Gordon and Brown (2016) "Children are evaluated because teachers and parents want to know what the children are learning." It is important to note that "assessment is not testing." [44]

Assessment is, however, a critical part of a high-quality early childhood program and is used to :

- Provide a record of growth in all developmental areas: cognitive, physical/motor, language, social-emotional, and approaches to learning.
- Identify children who may need additional support and determine if there is a need for intervention or support services.
- Help educators plan individualized instruction for a child or for a group of children that are at the same stage of development.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses within a program and information on how well the program meets the goals and needs of the children.
- Provide a common ground between educators and parents or families to use in collaborating on a strategy to support their child.

Pause to Reflect

What is assessment and why is it important? As defined by Gordon & Browne (2016) assessment is "an evaluation or determination of the importance disposition, or state something or someone, such as evaluating a child's skills, a classroom environment or a teacher's effectiveness" [45] How could you explain what is assessment it and why assessment is important in your own words?

The key to a good assessment is observation. [46] Whether you obtain your observation evidence through spontaneous or planned observations, it is suggested that you document your observations by utilizing various tools and techniques (e.g. running records, anecdotal notes, checklists, frequency counts, work samples, learning stories). As teachers watch children in natural settings, they can gather evidence that can then be used to track a child's learning, growth, and development throughout the school year. To start the assessment process, here is a road map for you to follow:

- Step 1: Gather Baseline Data
- Step 2 : Monitor Each Child's Progress
- Step 3 : Have a Systematic Plan in Place

Let's look at each step more closely.

Step 1. Establish a Baseline

Before you can assess a child's development, you must get to know your child. The first step is to gather "baseline" information. Through ongoing observation, you learn about each child's strengths, interests, and skills. While observing you may also uncover a child's unique learning styles, needs, or possible barriers that may limit them from optimal learning opportunities. For example, you may notice that when a child arrives in the morning, they tend to sit quietly at the table, and they don't engage with other children or join in play activities. As you track the behavior, you begin to see a pattern that when a teacher sits with the child and they read a story together, the child warms up much faster than when left alone. Baseline information provides you with a starting point that can help you build a respectful relationship with each child in your class.

Step 2. Monitor Progress

"The goal of observing children is to understand them better" (Gordon & Browne, 2016, p.119). Observations help guide our decisions, inform our practices, and help us to develop a plan of action that best fits each child's individual needs. With every observation, we can begin to see how all the pieces fit together to make the whole child . To successfully monitor a child's progress, we must look at the following:

- The child's social interactions
- The child's play preferences
- How the child handles their feelings and emotions
- The timeframe in which the child masters developmental milestones
- How the child processes information and is able to move onto to the next activity or level

With each observation, you gather more information and more evidence that can be used to assess the child's development.

Step 3. A Systematic Plan

Once you have gathered an array of evidence, it is time to organize it. There are two different types of assessment systems:

1. Program-developed child assessment tools are developed to align with a specific program's philosophy and curriculum.
2. Published child assessment tools have been researched and tested and are accepted as a credible source in assessing children's development.

Forms of Assessment

Whichever system is in place at your program, you will need to be trained accordingly. In this section, we will highlight the use of portfolios and learning stories as well as discuss the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP, 2015) as featured assessment systems that can be used to track a child's development.

Portfolios

Portfolios help teachers organize all the work samples, anecdotal notes, checklists, and learning stories that they have been collected for each child throughout the school year. A portfolio is similar to a traditional photograph album, but it is much more than an album. A portfolio is "an intentional compilation of materials and resources collected over time" (Gordon and Browne, 2016, p. 112). A portfolio is not an assessment tool in and of itself, it is a collection written observation notes for each photo and work sample. The evidence clearly documents a child's progression over time. Portfolios are important tools in helping to facilitate a partnership between teachers and parents. During conferences, teachers can showcase the portfolio as they share anecdotes of the child's progress. Parents (and children) enjoy seeing all the achievements and chronological growth that has occurred during the school year.

Digital portfolios or e-Portfolios are trending now as technology has become more accessible. Not only do e-Portfolios enable teachers to document children's activities faster, but teachers can also now post information and communicate with families on a regular basis, rather than waiting until the end of the school year for a traditional family conference.

What are the strengths of portfolios?

- Information in a portfolio is organized in a chronological order
- Portfolios promote a shared approach to decision making that can include the parent and child and teacher.
- Portfolios do not have the same constraints and narrow focus as standardized tests.
- Portfolios help teachers to keep track of a child's development over time
- Portfolios can help teachers develop richer relationships with the children in their classroom

What are the limitations of portfolios?

- To create and maintain a portfolio requires a large investment of time and energy
- Currently, there are no valid grading criteria to evaluate portfolios since outcomes can vary from one child to another
- Maintaining objectively can be challenging

Learning Stories

Learning Stories are written records that document what a teacher has observed a child doing. It becomes an actual learning story when the teacher adds his or her interpretation of the child's dispositions toward learning - such as grit, courage, curiosity, and perseverance. The story may be as short as one paragraph or as long as one page. Much like an anecdotal record, teachers observe and document brief moments as a child engages with peers or completes a task. With the learning story, however, the teacher connects learning goals and highlights developmental milestones that the child is mastering. With learning stories, teachers tend to focus on what the child can do rather than what they can't do. With almost all learning stories, teachers will take photographs (or video) to include with the written story.

What are the strengths of learning stories?

- By listening to, observing, and recording children's explorations, you send them a clear message that you value their ideas and thinking.
- As the teacher shares the Learning Story with the child, the child has the opportunity to reflect on his or her own development, thinking, and learning.
- The whole class can listen and participates in each other's stories and ideas.
- Learning stories provide parents with insight into how teachers plan for their children's learning.
- Parents uncover that teachers are thoughtful and continuous learners.
- Learning Stories encourage families and children to talk about school experiences.
- Learning Stories showcase how powerful and capable children really are

What are the limitations of learning stories?

- The quality of the learning story depends on the teacher's own subjectivity (ie: viewpoints, values, and feelings towards the child)
- Learning stories provide only a small snapshot of a child's learning.
- It takes time to write a learning story (teachers may only be able to write 1 or 2 stories per month) and critics argue that this may limit the amount of information a teacher will need to truly track a child's development
- Because learning stories are relatively new, there aren't official guidelines on how often to write learning stories and what exactly they should be included
- Learning stories are written up after the event or interaction has actually happened - so teachers need to have a good and accurate memory!

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)

The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is a standardized assessment tool that was developed by the California Department of Education (CDE), Child Development Division (CDD). Programs that are sponsored by the CDE, who serve children ages birth through 12 years of age (for example Lab schools, Head Start Programs, Early Start Programs, before and after school

programs, SELPA programs, and other programs funded by Title V) are most likely to use the DRDP. The assessment results are intended to guide program improvement and to support teachers as develop curriculum to meet children's individualized needs.

What are the strengths of the DRDP?

- The DRDP is aligned with California's learning foundations and educational standards.
- The DRDP includes family support.
- The DRDP incorporates authentic observation, documentation, and reflection.
- The DRDP measures each child's individual level of growth and development in all domains of development.

What are the limitations of the DRDP?

- Training teachers to be objective observers and aware of their biases can be challenging, especially with limited professional development opportunities.
- The tool may be considered rigid.
- Assessment, in general, is time-consuming

Pause to Reflect
What are your thoughts about using portfolios, learning stories, and the DRDP? Which are you most drawn to? Why?

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

In addition to strengthening relationships with children, sharing observations with children's families strengthens the home–program connection. Families must be "provided opportunities to increase their child observation skills and to share assessments with staff that will help plan the learning experiences." [47]

Families are with their child in all kinds of places and doing all sorts of activities. Their view of their child is even bigger than the teacher's. How can families and teachers share their observations, their assessment information, with each other? They can share through brief informal conversations, maybe at drop-off or pickup time, or when parents volunteer or visit the classroom. families and teachers also share their observations during longer and more formal times. Home visits and conferences are opportunities to chat a little longer and spend time talking about what the child is learning, what happens at home as well as what happens at school, how much progress the child is making, perhaps to problem solve if the child is struggling and figure out the best ways to support the child's continued learning. [48] Partnering with families will be discussed more in Chapter 8.

IN CLOSING

Effectively working with children and families, means that teachers must effectively use observation, documentation, and assessment. We use the cycle of assessment to help improve teaching practices, plan effective curriculum, and assess children's development. Families should be seen as partners in this process. Teachers must ensure that there is effective communication to support these relationships.

Chapter 5 (Developmental Ages and Stages) will build on observation to explore how we use the information gathered to define each unique stage of a child's development.

References

Chapter 5 - Developmental Ages and Stages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify the unique developmental ages and stages of young children and the practices that best meet the developmental needs.

NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

7. Promoting Child Development and Learning
8. Building Family and Community Relationships
9. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
10. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families
11. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum
12. Becoming a professional

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

Child Development and Learning

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Dual-Language Development

Family and Community Engagement

Learning Environments and Curriculum

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation

Professionalism

Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance

Special Needs and Inclusion

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: 1.1 – 1.4, 1.10, 1.11

Principles 1.1, 1.2, 1.7

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals: 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7

Principles: 2.6

Quotable
"Babies are such a nice way to start people."
– Don Herald

Preview

This chapter examines the child as a whole or what we commonly refer to in Early Childhood Education – "the whole child." The whole child refers to and addresses all areas or domains of the child – physical, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and spiritual. These domains of development are both collective and individual. Children have similar characteristics at different developmental ages, but they also are individuals with their own – "meness" that is important for us to consider when supporting all children in our early learning programs.

The Whole Child – Developmental Domains/Areas

Pause to Reflect
When you think about young children, what images emerge for you? How do you see them? What are some words that you may use to identify them?

When thinking about children, what comes to your mind? Is it the way they engage with you? Is it their sense of adventure? Is it watching them try to climb a ladder? Is it trying to figure out what they may be thinking about when they have a certain look on their faces that they are not yet able to articulate? Is it their obvious curiosity and imagination? This is how we begin to think of the child as a whole, complex being. An integrated, interrelated series of parts that become the "whole."

Figure 5.1 – Does an image like this come to mind when you think of children? [49]

In the field of Early Childhood Education, we identify these areas of development as domains. These domains (areas) are as follows:

Physical Development

Physical or physical motor development includes their large or gross motor development, their fine motor development, and their perceptual-motor development. The large or gross motor development of children consists of their large motor groups – running, jumping, skipping, swinging with their arms – in other words, the muscle groups that are closer to the body. The fine motor development of children consists of the small motor groups, like writing with their hands, squishing sand in-between their toes – muscle groups that are further away from the body. The last area of physical development is the perceptual-motor – their ability to catch a ball, to use a paintbrush and paint to create something from their memory – in other words, it refers to a child's developing ability to interact with their environment by combining the use of the senses and motor skills.

The first few years of life is dedicated to the heightened development of these skills. In the first year of life, they go from barely being able to hold their head up to walking upright. As many of you taking this course have varied experiences with children, this may be a refresher, but for some of you, this may be new information. It is crucial to the development of children, that they have many opportunities to use their bodies as their body is developing new pathways for success. In an early learning environment serving children from 0 – 5, there should be ample space and materials for children to explore and practice their emerging physical skills. This includes allowing them to take risks with their bodies allowing them to explore the possibilities. These risks afford children opportunities to feel that they are capable as well as gives them a sense of agency.

Figure 5.2 – What physical motor skills is this child practicing? [50]

Cognitive-Language Development

Cognitive or brain development speaks to how we process information, our curiosity/imagination, long and short-term memory, problem-solving, critical thinking, language both receptive and expressive, beginning reading, computing skills, creativity, etc. In other words, how our brain develops to help us to think about and understand the world around us.

We often place much emphasis on this area of development to the determent of the other areas of development. They all work in concert. When thinking about developing the "whole child" we need to be mindful of providing experiences that promote all of their development, not just their cognitive development.

As with the other areas/domains of development, the first 5 years of life are important in establishing the foundation for learning. This includes providing lots of rich experiences for exploration, curiosity, imagination, use of materials and equipment (that also fosters physical development), opportunities for talking (even with pre-verbal babies), etc. The learning experiences that we provide for children will be discussed in Chapter 6 - Curriculum and Chapter 7 - Learning Environments. Both of those chapters are dedicated to looking at the learning experiences (curriculum) and the environments we set up to support children's whole development.

Social-Emotional Development

Social-emotional development is the relationships that children have with themselves and others, the way they feel about themselves or their self-concept, the way they value themselves or their self-esteem, and he ability to express their feelings to themselves and others.

One of the important dispositions of being an early childhood professional is supporting children's well-being. It is both a moral and ethical responsibility. By nature, children are trusting and look to the adults in their world to provide them with the necessary skills to be successful in their life's journey. We can either elevate or diminish a child.

Figure 5.3 – What relationship do you think these two children have? [51]

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development, or considering the "spirit" of the child, is something that is a more recent addition to thinking about "whole child" development. In a recent article entitled Supporting Spiritual Development in the Early Childhood Classroom by Amelia Richardson Dress, she cites emerging research that indicates the importance of considering this element of a child. "Spirit is the thing that makes us us. Spirituality is the way we connect our 'inner us' to everything else, including other people's inner 'usness." [52] Our spiritual development is a part of our social-emotional development; however, we find it important to call this out specifically to guide our practice of supporting and elevating children's uniqueness. In Chapter 6 Curriculum, it looks at how to support children's curiosity. Curriculum that is based on children's interests, engages their curiosity, is playful, and provides trust, elevates how children see themselves as dynamic, competent human beings. Simply by providing rich, open-ended materials and encouraging their natural desire to ask questions, we support a child's sense of wonder.

Developmental Ages and Stages

Pause to Reflect
What do you know about the various ages and stages of child development? What interests you in working with children? Do you have a particular age group that brings you more joy? What do you know about that age group?

Identification of the common characteristics of children at various developmental ages has been around for quite some time. Gesell (mentioned in Chapter 2 – Theories of Early Childhood Education) and Ilg conducted research to identify some of these common characteristics of each developmental age. They published a series of books that provide a comprehensive look at those developmental ages. Parents as well as early childhood professionals have found these helpful to understand how to relate to and interact with children as we socialize and educate them in our homes and our schools

Other theories have used these to define how to interact with children, what to expect from children, and how a child's brain develops (Refer back to Chapter 2 Theories of Early Childhood Education). For early childhood professionals, theories help us to set up our curriculum, our environments, our expectations, and build meaningful and engaging relationships with children to support the "whole child."

The following graphics provide an overview of these developmental ages and stages (aka milestones). It is important to note that using these age-level charts require discretion. While they help to define "typical" development, children also are unique in their developmental progress. We use them as guidelines to help inform our practice with young children.

We must always remember:

- The milestones to gain a deeper understanding of the age group as a whole
- That each child, within that developmental age group, is a unique individual
- That children exhibit a range of developmental norms over time
- To resist the tendency to categorize or stereotype children
- To observe each child and assess where they are developmentally
- That each child goes through most of the stages describes, but how they do is the individual nature of who they are
- To focus on what children can do, to build on their strengths, and to find ways to support areas that need to be more developed
- That these milestones refer to typically developing children and are not meant in any way to represent a picture of any "one" child

Note: You may notice that the following charts do not mention spiritual development as one of the domains. There is no specific age nor specific expectations of a child's spiritual development. This development is ongoing as it is supported by the interactions the child has with the world around them.

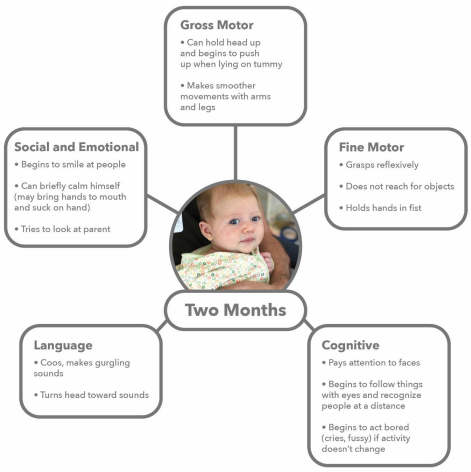

Figure 5.4 – Developmental milestones typically met around 2 months of age. [53]

Figure 5.5 – Developmental milestones typically met around 4 months of age. [54]

Figure 5.6 – Developmental milestones typically met around 6 months of age. [55]

https://socialsci.libretexts.org/@go/page/86380

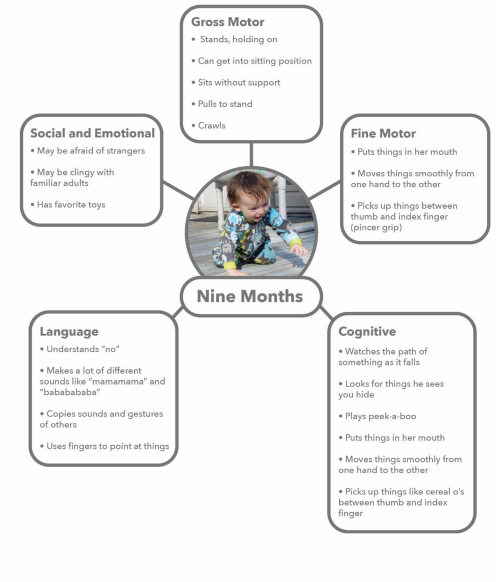

Figure 5.7 – Developmental milestones typically met around 9 months of age. [56]

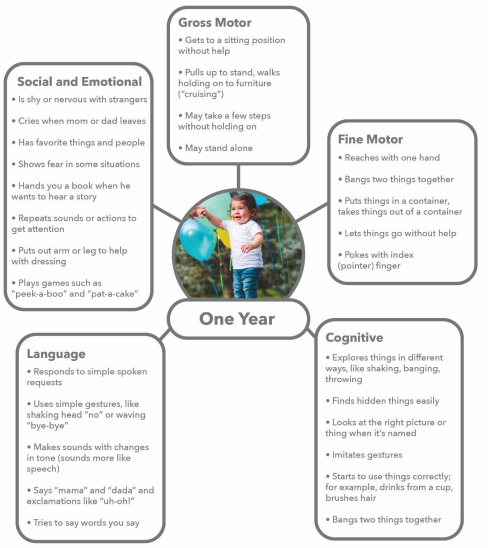

Figure 5.8 – Developmental milestones typically met around 1 year of age. [57]

https://socialsci.libretexts.org/@go/page/86380

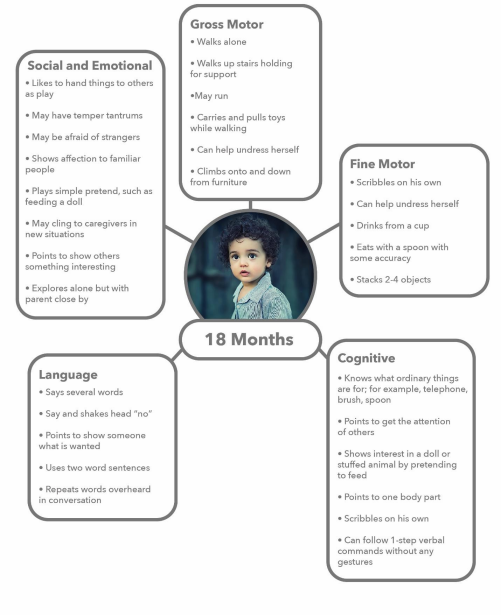

Figure 5.9 – Developmental milestones typically met around 18 months of age. [58]

Figure 5.10 – Developmental milestones typically met around 2 years of age. [59]

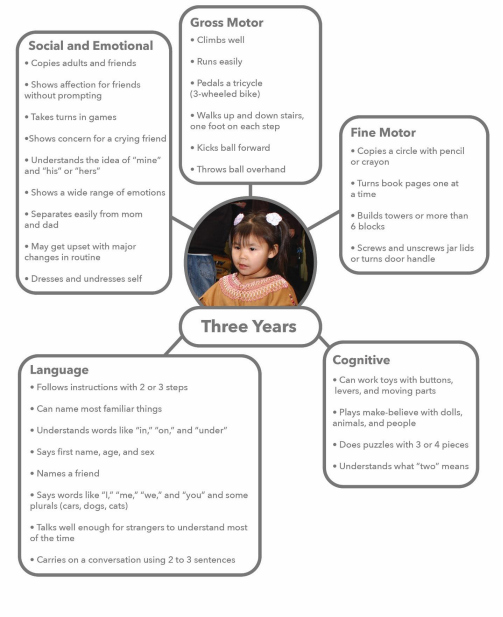

Figure 5.11 – Developmental milestones typically met around 3 years of age. [60]

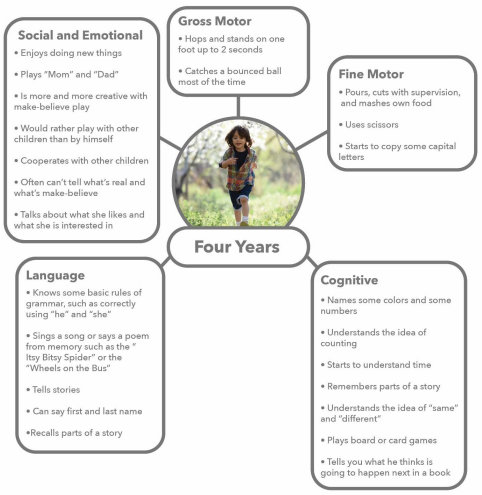

Figure 5.12 – Developmental milestones typically met around 4 years of age. [61]

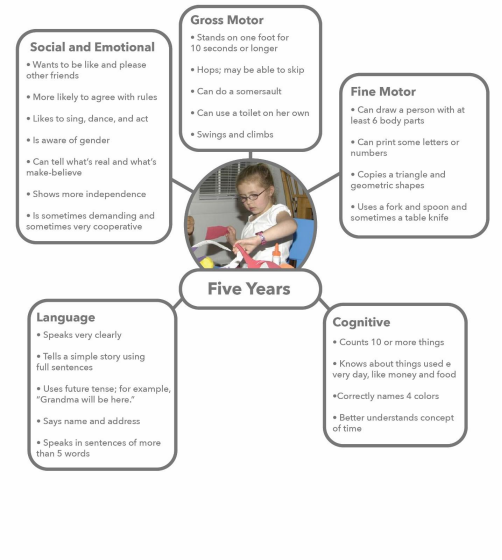

Figure 5.13 – Developmental milestones typically met around 5 years of age. [62]

Figure 5.14– Developmental milestones typically met around 6 years of age. [63]

Figure 5.15 – Developmental milestones typically met around 7 years of age. [64]

Figure 5.16 – Developmental milestones typically met around 8 years of age. [65]

?	Pause to Reflect Has reading over the developmental milestones of different developmental ages changed your ideas about children? What age group may you be most interested in working with? What age group may present more challenges for you?

Developmental Factors by Age

Here is an additional chart to provide more context. While each child develops at their own rate and in their own time and may not match every listed item, here are some general descriptions of children by age:

Table 5.1 – Factors Influencing Behaviors by Age [66]

Age	General Descriptors
1-2 Years	• Like to explore their environment • Like to open and take things apart • Like to dump things over • Can play alone for short periods of time • Still in the oral stage, may use biting, or hitting to express their feelings or ideas
2-3 Years	• Need to run, climb, push and pull • Are not capable of sharing, waiting, or taking turns • Want to do things on their own • Work well with routine • Like to follow adults around • Prolong bedtime • Say “no” • Understand more than he/she can say
3-4 Years	• Like to run, jump, climb • May grow out of naps • Want approval from adults • Want to be included “me too” • Are curious about everything • May have new fears and anxieties • Have little patience, but can wait their turn • Can take some responsibility • Can clean up after themselves

4-5 Years	• Are very active • Start things but don't necessarily finish them • Are bossy and boastful • Tell stories, exaggerate • Use "toilet" words in a "silly" way • Have active imaginations
5-6 Years	• Want everything to be fair • Able to understand responsibility • Able to solve problems on their own • Try to negotiate

Quotable
"I remember one morning when I discovered a cocoon in the bark of a tree, just as the butterfly was making a hole in its case and preparing to come out. I waited a while, but it was too long appearing and I was impatient. I bent over it and breathed on it to warm it. I warmed it as quickly as I could and the miracle began to happen before my eyes, faster than life. The case opened, the butterfly started slowly crawling out and I shall never forget my horror when I saw how its wings were folded back and crumpled; the wretched butterfly tried with its whole trembling body to unfold them. Bending over it, I tried to help it with my breath. In vain. It needed to be hatched out patiently and the unfolding of the wings should be a gradual process in the sun. Now it was too late. My breath had forced the butterfly to appear, all crumpled, before its time. It struggled desperately and, a few seconds later, died in the palm of my hand. That little body is, I do believe, the greatest weight I have on my conscience. For I realize today that it is a mortal sin to violate the great laws of nature. We should not hurry, we should not be impatient, but we should confidently obey the eternal rhythm."
-Nikos Kazantzakis, from Zorba the Greek

Pause to Reflect
How does this quote apply to children's development? How can you as an early childhood professional honor a child's current stage of development and not try to hurry them through? How can you respect each stage as an important milestone needed to experience fully in order to move successfully to the next, gradually when that child is ready? What happens when we try to hurry to introduce concepts to children they are not yet ready for?

Cultural Identity Development

Culture can be defined as ideas, knowledge, behaviors, beliefs, art, values, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by particular people or society, and these are passed along from one generation to the next by the way of communication. Our cultural identity is an integrated part of our development.

Cultural identity refers to a person's sense of belonging to a particular culture or group. This process involves learning about and accepting the traditions, heritage, language, religion, ancestry, aesthetics, thinking patterns, and social structures of a culture.

Early Childhood Professionals support the cultural identity of the children and families we serve. We do this by getting to know the child and their family. We stay away from our biases/assumptions about what we think we know about a particular race/ethnicity/religion, etc. and we seek to engage in relationships with families that honor how that family identifies their cultural identity. ECE 106 (The Role of Equity and Diversity in Early Childhood Education) uncovers how we can best serve families with respectful and supportive practices.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

In Chapter 2 – Developmental and Learning Theories, there is a section on Developmentally Appropriate Practices. What is important to note here is that identifying the developmental ages and stages of children helps us to plan curriculum (Chapter 6) and learning environments (Chapter 7) that are appropriate for their developmental age and stage. Below is a refresher from Chapter 2 as it is pertinent in this chapter. Understanding the importance of DAP sets the stage for identifying ways in which to support children in the early childhood learning environment.

There are three important aspects of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP):

1. What is known about child development and learning – referring to knowledge of age-related characteristics that permits general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children's learning and development.
2. What is known about each child as an individual – referring to what practitioners learn about each child that has implications for how best to adapt and be responsive to that individual variation.
3. What is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live – referring to the values, expectations, and behavioral and linguistic conventions that shape children's lives at home and in their communities that practitioners must strive to understand in order to ensure that learning experiences in the program or school are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family. [67]

Behavioral Considerations

Guiding the behavior of children is another important role that early childhood professionals possess. There are a plethora of programs designed to provide parents and early childhood professionals with the skills and tools that effectively help children navigate their emotions and the behaviors that they may exhibit at different developmental ages. Chapter 6 (Curriculum) has more extensive information on this topic. Below is a chart that provides some ideas about how to approach guidance positively.

Table 5.2 – Positive Approaches for Developmental Factors [68]

Ages/Stages	Developmental Factors	Examples of a Positive Approach to developmental factors to manage behavior
Infant/Toddler	Children this age: • Actively explore environments • Like to take things apart • Have limited verbal ability, so biting or hitting to express feelings is common • Like to dump things over	Children in this stage tend to dump and run, so plan games to enhance this behavior in a positive way. Have large wide-mouth bins for children to practice "dumping items" into and out of. This strategy redirects the behavior of creating a mess into a structured activity to match the development.
Older Toddlers	Children this age: • Need to run, climb, push and pull • Are incapable of sharing; waiting or taking turns • Express beginning independence • Work well with routines • Say "no" often • Comprehend more than they can verbally express	Teachers of this age often find children trying to climb up on tables, chairs, and shelves. Incorporate developmentally climbing equipment and create obstacle courses to redirect activity into positive behaviors. Avoid using the word "no" and create expressions that teach what to do instead of what not to do.

Young Preschool (3-4 years)	Children this age: • Like to be active • Are curious and ask many questions • Express new fears and anxieties • Have little patience • Can clean up after themselves • Can take some responsibility • Seek adult approval	Young preschoolers become curious and create many misconceptions as they create new schemas for understanding concepts. Listen to ideas sensitively address them quickly and honestly. Model exploration and engagement in new activities (especially ones they may be fearful of engaging in)
Older Preschool (4-5 years)	Children this age: • Are highly active • Can be "bossy" • Have an active imagination • Exaggerate stories • Often use "toilet words" in silly ways • Start things but don't always finish	Ask the children to create new silly, but appropriate words to represent emotions rather than focusing on the "bad" words they use.
Young School-Age	Children this age: • Are able to problem solve on their own • Begin to understand responsibility • Think in terms of fairness • Attempt to negotiate	Fairness is a big issue for this group so working with this age group, a teacher should sit with children to develop "rules" and "consequences" so they can take ownership of behavioral expectations

Pause to Reflect
What makes the most sense to you about guiding children's behavior? What seems confusing to you?

In Closing

It is of crucial importance that early childhood professionals have an understanding of the stages children move through at various ages. As our foundation, having this knowledge allows us to more effectively set expectations, plan interactions and curriculum, set up appropriate learning environments, and share information with parents that meets the current needs of the children we work with. Once we understand these general developmental patterns, we are able to move to understanding individual children's interests and abilities within this framework.

As we continue to build upon this chapter, a deep understanding of developmental ages and stages will be the cornerstone for Chapter 6 (Curriculum), Chapter 7 (Environments), and Chapter 8 (Partnering with Families). Referring back to these stages allows us to foster experiences and interactions geared toward children's current abilities and strengths. Through this lens, we are able to see children for what the CAN do rather than what they cannot do YET, helping them move gradually from one stage to the next when they are ready.

References

Chapter 6 – Curriculum Basics

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Examine curriculum concepts related to planning, implementing, and evaluating interactions and experiences in early childhood settings.
- Identify major components to early childhood curriculum including play based learning, behavioral considerations, and various types of curriculum models.

NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

13. Promoting Child Development and Learning
14. Building Family and Community Relationships
15. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
16. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families
17. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum
18. Becoming a professional

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Dual-Language Development
- Family and Community Engagement
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Professionalism
- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: 1.1 – 1.12

Principles: 1.1 – 1.5, 2.7

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals: 2.1 – 2.9

Principles: 2.2, 2.5, 2.6

Section III: Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues (it is broken into two specific responsibilities)

B – Responsibilities to employers

Ideals: 3B.1

Section IV: Ethical Responsibility to Community and Society (we have both an individual and a collective responsibility)

Ideal: 4.1

Preview

	Pause to Reflect When you hear the word “curriculum” what comes to mind?

As we have learned in previous chapters, developing relationships, as well as understanding the developmental stages and individual interests and skills of children is crucial to effective teaching. This is accomplished through interactions and both informal and formal observations with the children in our care. This information will form the cornerstone of what is called “curriculum”, which includes both the planned and unplanned experiences that occur throughout the day. While you will devote an entire course to understanding curriculum in ECE 104 (Introduction to Curriculum in Early Childhood), we will visit some of the basic concepts below.

Development and Learning

“Development” and “learning” are two integrated concepts that we promote as teachers. As children are “learning” new concepts and skills, they are fostering their “development”. Our goal is to encourage the development of the “whole child” (physical, cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual) by providing learning experiences based on children’s interests and abilities, a concept known as “ intentional teaching ”.

Although children learn in an integrated manner (blending all areas of development together) these areas are often broken down for planning purposes. While we looked at this in chapter 5, Developmental Ages and Stages, to understand development, the same is true when planning curriculum.

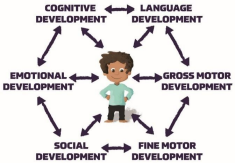

Figure 6.1 – All areas of development affect and are affected by each other [69]

Table 6.1 below shows the relationship between the domains of development and concepts of learning.

Table 6.1: Relationship between Development and Learning [70]

Development	Learning
Cognitive	Science, Technology, Math
Language	Language and Literacy
Physical	Health, Safety, Nutrition, Self-Help Skills, Physical Education
Social, Emotional, Spiritual	Social Science, Visual and Performing Arts

	Vignette Javier and Ji are playing in the block area. They have stacked several large blocks on top of each other. Twice the blocks have fallen and each time they have modified their plan slightly to make them stay. Once stable, Ji counts the blocks and Javier turns to the teacher and proudly says, “Look at our 5 story building, you should shop here.”

	Pause to Reflect Can you find development and learning for Javier and Ji in each of the categories listed in the table above?

If you are interested in further exploration, the California Learning Foundations that describe competencies and the companion California Preschool Curriculum Framework present strategies for early childhood educators. You can explore each of these:

- California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations (www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/it foundations 2009.pdf)
- California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/docu...mframework.pdf)
- California Preschool Learning Foundations
- Volume 1 addresses social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfo...sp#psfoundvol1)
- Volume 2 addresses visual and performing arts, physical development, and health (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfo...sp#psfoundvol2)
- Volume 3 addresses history-social science and science (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfo...sp#psfoundvol3)
- California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks
- Volume 1 addresses social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfr...sp#psframevol1)
- Volume 2 addresses visual and performing arts, physical development, and health (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfr...sp#psframevol2)
- Volume 3 addresses history-social science and science (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfr...sp#psframevol3)

These will also be visited in more detail in ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum.

Play: The vehicle for Development and Learning

Since in previous chapters we have explored the notion that children learn through “play”, let’s expand on that concept a bit as it relates to curriculum.

Figure 6.2 – Play [71]

Children are born observers and are active participants in their own learning and understanding of the world around them from the very beginning of their existence. This means they are not just recipients of a teacher's knowledge. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) challenges early childhood professionals to be intentional in their interactions and environments to create optimal experiences to maximize children's growth and development. Under this umbrella of DAP, knowledge is based upon discovery and discovery occurs through active learning and abundant opportunities for exploration. Through a "hands-on" approach and using play as a vehicle, children will develop the skills necessary for growth and development and maximize their learning.

Teachers play a pivotal role in children's active construction of knowledge. They intentionally provide the environments, interactions, and experiences that support children in actively building concepts, skills, and overall development. The role of the teacher who works with young children in early childhood is to support children's active construction of knowledge. In a sense, early childhood teachers serve as research supports as the children sense, discover, and construct meaning about the world around them.

Early childhood teachers are responsible for:

- offering children well-stocked play spaces where they can construct concepts and ideas, preferably in the company of peers
- designing daily routines that invite children to be active participants and to use emerging skills and concepts
- supporting children's learning through interactions and conversations that prompt using language and ideas in new ways

Things to Remember About How Children Development Learn

- Actively exploring, experimenting, gathering data, making sense of it
- Exploration is a continual process that takes time and repetition
- Begins with concrete, "real life" experiences before abstract concepts
- Takes place in a social context
- Encompasses a broad range of developmental domains
- Development typically occurs in a sequence or continuum
- There are many Individual differences to consider

- Interests
- Abilities
- Learning styles
- Temperaments
- Family and Cultural Experiences
- Communities

As we think about play, it is important to remember that there are different types of play that children engage in. Chapter 2 (Developmental & Learning Theories) introduced you to a list of 12 different types (also included in the appendix for easy reference). Quality teachers incorporate plans for each of these types of play throughout the day. They set up activities and plan experiences that will allow children to make sense of their world through each of these play modalities. While teachers keep all 12 in mind, they often combine some of them to narrow down the areas and experiences they provide and chapter 7 (Learning Environments) will look at this in more detail. A common framework used by teachers as they define areas and activities is as follows:

- Socio-Dramatic Play : Acting out experiences and taking on roles they are familiar with. Often incorporates Symbolic Play where children use materials and actions to represent something else.
- Creative Play : Trying out new ideas and using imagination, with a focus on the process rather than the product.
- Exploratory Play : Using senses to explore and discover the properties and function of things.
- Constructive Play: Using materials to build, construct, and create.
- Loco-motor Play : Moving for movement's sake, just because it is fun. [72]

Figure 6.3 – Constructive Play

Figure 6.4 – Creative Play

Figure 6.5 – Exploratory Play

Figure 6.6 –Socio-Dramatic Play

Figure 6.7 – Locomotor Play

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Pause to Reflect
Going back to Table 6.1, which concepts are being developed by which types of play? By incorporating each of these types of play, are you developing the "whole child"? Why or why not?

As with most things, the way that children play will go through developmental stages. As teachers plan, they keep in mind the stages of play relevant to the children they are planning for. Originally described by Parten (1932), this list, explains how children's play changes by age as they grow and develop social skills.

- Unoccupied Play (Birth-3 Months): At this stage, a baby is making many movements with their arms, legs, hands, feet, etc. They are learning about and discovering how their body moves.
- Solitary Play (Birth-2 Years): This is the stage when a child plays alone. They are not interested in playing with others quite yet.
- Spectator/Onlooker Behavior (2 Years): During this stage, a child begins to watch other children playing but does not play with them.
- Parallel Play (2+Years): When a child plays alongside or near others but does not play with them.
- Associate Play (3-4 Years): When a child starts to interact with others during play, but there is not a large amount of interaction at this stage.
- Cooperative Play (4+ years): When a child plays together with others and has interest in both the activity and other children involved in playing. [73]

Pause to Reflect
Why might these stages be important to consider? How would you use this information in your planning?

What Children Learn Through Play

Just like the "whole child" is often broken down into developmental domains for studying, so too is learning. Many aspects of learning occur simultaneously; it is integrated and connected. To define learning we often break it into categories. Because the connection between play and learning is so important, the way it is broken down exists in many forms, including assessments, planning resources, and the frameworks and foundations mentioned above. Figure 6.8 is a compilation of such skills, compiled by Eyrich (2016) tying development into learning.

Figure 6.8 – What Children Learn Through Play [74]

PHYSICAL PERSONAL CARE (hygiene, feeding, dressing,) NUTRITION SAFETY MOTOR (MOVEMENT) SKILLS Active physical play Perceptual-motor (senses, effort, direction,) Gross (large) motor (running, throwing, …) Fine (small) motor (hands, fingers, feet, toes)	CREATIVITY Flexibility (shifting from 1 idea to another) Fluency (producing many ideas) Sensitivity (awareness (moods, textures, senses,) Imagination / Originality Risk Taking / Elaboration (pushing boundaries) Self as a resource (awareness, confidence in ability) Experience (to build mastery to build upon) Visual and Performing Arts
COGNITIVE APPROACHES TO LEARNING & SELF REGULATION Maintain attention Self-comfort Curiosity and initiative Self-control of feelings and behavior Engagement and persistence SKILLS OF INQUIRY Observe, investigate, document, communicate KNOWLEDGE OF THE NATURAL/PHYSICAL WORLD Understanding properties and events CAUSE AND EFFECT Understanding relationship between cause/effect CLASSIFICATION Learning the attributes of objects by exploring Compare, match, sort, categorize Finding similarities and differences Symbol NUMBER Understanding quantity (amount, degree) Assigning a numerical symbol to quantity Counting MEASUREMENT Awareness of difference in properties (size, length, weight, capacity, volume) Seriation (order 3 or more by comparison) (small/medium/large, loud/louder/loudest) Time (sequence of events, rhythm, yesterday/ tomorrow) PATTERNING Recognize, reproduce, repeating sequences SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS Experiences an object's position in relation to others	SOCIAL SKILLS LEARNED WITH ADULTS Can stay at school without parent Can respond/enjoy adults other than parents Adults will help in times of need Adult will not always solve problems SKILLS LEARNED WITH PEERS Different approaches work for different peers Cooperation and turn taking Lead and follow Sustain relationships and helping peers Share materials, equipment, people, ideas Asserting rights and self defense Negotiating skills and solving conflicts Anticipate and avoid problems Realistic expectations and valuing differences SKILLS LEARNED IN A GROUP Respect Responsibility Compassion Tolerance Group identity Follow and adapt to routines and expectations How to enter and exit situations Deal with delay of gratification (patience) SKILLS LEARNED AS AN INDIVIDUAL Self-help and self-care Make choices and initiate own activities Cope with rejection, hurt feelings, disappointment Take responsibility
	EMOTIONAL ABILITY TO DEAL WITH FEELINGS Notice, label, and accept feelings Express feelings in appropriate ways Deal with feelings of others Resolve inner fears, conflicts ABILITY TO EXERCISE JUDGEMENT Notice, label, and make choices Think through consequences Evaluate effectiveness of choices Learn to take another viewpoint ENJOYING ONE'S SELF AND ONE'S POWER Acquire a sense of self Develop self-confidence and self-esteem Build trust in self and others Reveal own personality

LANGUAGE SYMBOL / SYMBOLIC REASONING Sounds and letters are put together to represent things RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE Listening, understanding, responding EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE Speaking, communicating, conversation GRAPHIC (WRITTEN) LANGUAGE/ LITERACY Interest in print & books, phonology, pre-reading, reading Symbol, letter, print knowledge, pre-writing, writing	Learn to take risks & learn from mistakes Become competent in several areas

	Pause to Reflect Go back to the vignette with Javier and Ji. Looking at Figure 6.8, can you find learning that took place in all 6 of the domains? How might you use this list in your planning and communicating with families about "playing to learn"?

Interactions

Figure 6.9 – Teachers will interact with groups of children [75]	Figure 6.10 – And teachers will interact with children one-on-one [76]

It cannot be repeated enough that human beings are social creatures that thrive on relationships. In order to maximize a child's interests, willingness to take risks, try again when initial attempts have not gone as planned, and learn to their fullest, we must establish and maintain relationships with children that foster trust and encourage autonomy and initiative.

Interactions should be as much of what we plan for as the materials and experiences themselves. Built into every curriculum plan should be thoughts about how the teacher will:

- Create a sense of safety and trust
- Acknowledge children's autonomy
- Foster a growth mindset
- Extend learning through open-ended statements and conversations

Reflect back on Chapter 3 - The Teacher's Role and the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships to foster brain development. The concept of a "Neuro-Relational approach" will be present in the curriculum that we plan for young children.

Quality interactions will include:

- Valuing each child for who they are
- Finding something special and positive about each child
- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Finding time each day to interact and make a connection with every child
- Respecting children's opinions and ideas
- Being present for children
- Reflecting back what they say and do
- Listening to listen hear rather than respond
- Creating a warm and welcoming environment
- Being consistent as a means of establishing trust
- Focusing on the process
- Focusing on what children CAN do rather than what they can't do YET
- Including families as valuable team members (for more information refer to Chapter 8 – Relating to Families)
- Understanding and respecting each child's individual and group culture

	Pause to Reflect Do these make sense to you? Are there others? Which will be easiest for you? Most difficult? Why?

Communication goes hand in hand with interaction. Being aware of what we are saying and how we are saying it is crucial in establishing and maintaining relationships. Positive communication includes:

Nonverbal :

- Get down to children's level
- Observe
- Be present
- Listen
- Understand
- Use positive facial expressions
- Look interested
- Smile

Verbal :

- Be aware of the tone and volume of your voice
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use facial expressions and body movements that match your words
- Give choices and share control
- Focus on the positive
- Describe what you are doing as children are watching
- Model appropriate language
- Reflect back what children are saying
- Have conversations with multiple exchanges
- Consider close vs. open-ended questions and statements

The type of questions you ask will elicit different responses. Sometimes we want a direct answer while most of the time we want to generate deeper thinking to promote learning. Consider each of the questions below regarding the color blue:

- "Are you wearing blue today"?
- "What color are your pants"?
- "Tell me all the things you see that are blue"

Each will point out that the child's pants are blue, but in very different ways.

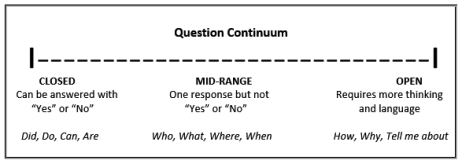


Figure 6.11 – The question continuum [77]

Considering what type of thinking we want to promote enables us to create questions and statements that spark that knowledge. Thinking is often broken down into two types:

- Convergent thinking – emphasizes coming up with one correct response; "converging" on the "right" answer.
- Divergent thinking – emphasized generating multiple responses, brainstorming and "thinking outside the box"; "diverging" into different ways of thinking and answering.

Both can be valuable as children develop and learn. Often starting with divergent questions and then following up with convergent questions allows for broad thinking that can then be narrowed down.

	Pause to Reflect How might you use these communication strategies in your planning, implementing, and reviewing/assessing curriculum for children?
	Vignette Teacher Odom sets up a play dough table with ingredients to make dough and materials to use after it is made. He lets the children know that he will be there if anyone wants to join him. Three children hurry over and he greets each of them and says, "I'm so happy you decided to join. Let's get started". He shows them the recipe and encourages them to decide how to proceed. They take turns adding the ingredients and he shows patience and interest as they take the lead, asking open-ended questions along the way, "What will we do next?" "What do you think will happen?" and facilitating conversations. He points out each of their contributions along the way and focuses on the processes they are using rather than the finished product. He encourages them to interact with each other, "Wow, look at how B did that" and "Isn't it interesting how you both added flour but you did it so differently". Other children come to join and he encourages the original three to find ways to include them. When the dough is complete, the children use a variety of rolling pins, cookie cutters, and dull plastic knives to play with it. He continues expressing his interest, by commenting on how each child is using the materials and asks open-ended questions to foster deeper learning.
	Pause to Reflect What are some ways the teacher fostered interactions with children to enhance their trust, encourage their autonomy and initiative, and foster thinking and learning?
	Pause to Reflect Going back to Table 6.1 on Development and Learning, can you find skills from each of the categories that the children would be enhancing? How do interactions help foster these skills?

In Chapter 4 (Observation and Assessment) we discussed the importance of using our observational skills to get to know the individual children we are planning for. We introduced the Cycle of Reflection, which begins with observing, documenting, and interpreting so that you can plan, implement and evaluate appropriate interactions and experiences that make sense and meet the needs of the particular children we are working with. Below we will take a deeper look at the ways we use our observational data and interpretations.

Planning

As with most endeavors, we are more effective when we plan curriculum ahead of time. This helps us to be prepared and to adjust our ideas to be flexible as the children engage with what we have planned.

Reasons to plan:

- Make sure our plans meet the needs, interests, and abilities of the children
- Make sure we understand the learning and development that will occur
- Make sure we have all the materials we will need
- Make sure we know where in the environment to set up
- Make sure we know how to set up
- Make sure we know how to encourage children to participate
- Make sure we have thought through behavioral issues that might arise and how to handle them
- Make sure we have thought through the interactions that will take place
- Make sure we know how we will encourage the children to clean up
- Make sure we know how we might gather observational notes
- Make sure we have thought through how we might document and share this experience with parents or others.

Pause to Reflect
Do these make sense to you? Are there others?

If we have planned thoroughly and thoughtfully, it allows us to implement our plans and to reflect on them afterward, using that information for future planning.

Often referred to as the Plan - Do (implement) - Review (evaluate) cycle, this type of approach allows us to continuously provide the most effective curriculum to the young children in our care.

Figure 6.12 – Plan Do Review Cycle

Chapter 7 (Learning Environments), will discuss early childhood daily routines in more detail. For now, let us consider that most programs are broken down into segments of the day, beginning with the arrival of the children and ending with their departure. Teachers will plan for all segments of the day, both inside and outside, which might include:

- Arrival and Departure
- Small group time
- Large group time
- Centers
- Child initiated play
- Nutrition (snack, lunch,…)
- Self-help (washing hands, toileting, napping,…)
- Transitions between all segments of the day
- Others as each program dictates

One of the best planning strategies is to use a written format. Sometimes we plan one activity or experience on a single form. Other times we plan for multiple experiences on the same form. New teachers are often encouraged to plan each activity separately at first until they feel comfortable with the process.

Reasons for a written plan:

- Keeps things in order
- Assures everything is thought through and not forgotten
- Can be referred to as needed throughout the process
- Can be shared with others
- Documents planning for record-keeping purposes
- Can be saved to be repeated or modified without having to start from scratch

Pause to Reflect
Do these make sense to you? Are there others?

When planning it can be helpful to know that certain terms are used in a variety of ways by various programs. Because this chapter is written for a diverse group of future early childhood educators, we will use these terms interchangeably so that you are ready for the vocabulary used wherever you may work.

Some of the terms most frequently used to represent the “goings-on” you will plan for are:

- Lesson
- Activity
- Learning Experience
- Curriculum
- Teaching Moment

While they may have slightly different “official” meanings, they overlap in our field and can all be found to begin with a plan based on children’s interests and needs, i mplemented according to the plan (with modifications as they occur), and reviewed/evaluated afterward through reflection to assess and build upon for the future.

Below are examples of generic planning forms (used later in other ECE courses at College of the Canyons). You will see planning for a specific activity and planning for the entire day. For each there will is a blank version and a sample version. The programs you work in will each have their own unique method and planning forms, but most will include some, if not all, of the information included here.

Blank Example Planning Form for Specific Activity

CURRICULUM / ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Title / Description:
Resources (Where did you learn about this activity) :
Reason(s) for Curriculum Plan (justify by considering developmental milestones, learning domains, observations in your assigned children's classroom, and your knowledge of child development, milestones, word picture handout & DAP that guided your decision to implement this particular activity)
Ages of Children: Number of Children:
Location:
Segment of Daily Routine:
Materials Needed (be specific-quantities, color, book and song titles, etc.)
Implementation / Directions (List step-by-step as if the implementation could be replicated without you; include set up and clean up, involving children whenever possible. Step-by-step description of learning activities with specific detail.) Describe step-by-step what the children will be doing.
Now describe your role. Your guidance supports a maximum learning environment. Flexibility and supporting the child's process is vital. Questions to ask yourself: How will you introduce the activity? How will you engage the children? What will you be doing/saying? What is your role during the activity ? What open-ended questions will you be using? Please include a minimum of 3 open-ended questions for your activity.
Specific ways this activity will facilitate development:
Physical:
a)
b)
Cognitive:
a)
b)
Language:
a)
b)
Social/Emotional:
a)
b)
Creative:
a)
b)
Behavioral Considerations (Plan ahead…what issues might arise/what strategies might help) :
a)
b)
c)
Documentation How will you collect and display the development listed above? (documentation board, classroom book, PowerPoint, Prezi, creative ideas, etc.):
Webbing Ideas (List at least 5 activities to extend the learning into other areas; try to include one appropriate use of technology):
Modifications to include ALL children (developmental delays, disabilities, cultural and linguistic diversities, etc.):
a)
b)
c)
Inclusion of Parents/Families:
Other Notes / Considerations:

Sample Planning Form for Specific Activity

CURRICULUM / ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Developed by: Suzie Student
Title / Description: Nature Scavenger Hung
Resources (Where did you learn about this activity)
Mr.Bossman, my mentor teacher implemented this activity with his class. Book Resource: Nature Fun Curriculum Guide , by I.B. Squirrly, Acorn Press, 2019
Reason(s) for Curriculum Plan (justify by considering developmental milestones, learning domains, observations in your assigned children's classroom, and your knowledge of child development, milestones, word picture handout & DAP that guided your decision to implement this particular activity)
As the season is changing, several children have commented on observations they are making in nature (leaves are falling, colors are changing, weather,…). They have been showing a lot of interest in books related to nature. They are also bringing in items they are finding on the ground in their homes or community (pinecones, sticks, leaves…)
Ages of Children: 4 Number of Children: 20 (entire class)
Location: outside on the yard
Segment of Daily Routine: outside time
Materials Needed (be specific-quantities, color, book and song titles, etc.) (NAEYC Standard 1c) :

- list of items (pics & words)
- items on list
- pen and paper for recording responses
- nature chart or book for researching items
- bags to put items in if requested

Implementation / Directions (List step-by-step as if the implementation could be replicated without you; include set up and clean up, involving children whenever possible. Step-by-step description of learning activities with specific detail.) Describe step-by-step what the children will be doing.
Begin by welcoming the group and letting them know how happy we are they have joined us. Invite children to assist in finding some objects. Divide children into small groups and give each group 1 scavenger hunt list. Encourage the children to find the objects on the list. Remind children of the behavioral expectations for the activity.
Now describe your role. Your guidance supports a maximum learning environment. Flexibility and supporting the child's process is vital. Questions to ask yourself: How will you introduce the activity? How will you engage the children? What will you be doing/saying? What is your role during the activity ? What open-ended questions will you be using? Please include a minimum of 3 open-ended questions for your activity.
Encourage children to explore colors, shapes, textures, sizes,…. Encourage children to discuss among themselves how items are the same and how they are different and why they fit into a chosen category. As children engage in the activity, write down their statements for future documentation. Use open-ended questions to stimulate discussion and reflect children's statements and ideas to other children. For clean up encourage each group to but their collections inside for a future art activity.
Specific ways this activity will facilitate development: (NAEYC Standard 5a)
Physical:
a) fine motor as they pick up objects
b) gross motor as they bend, reach, walk,…
Cognitive:
a) classification as they sort by size, texture, color,…
b) number as they count their items
Language:
a) listening (receptive) as they listen to each other
b) talking (expressive) as they discuss their items with each other
Social/Emotional:
a) group skills such as taking turns, waiting, listening to others
b) sense of accomplishment as they find items and solve problems that arise
Creative:
a) flexibility and fluency as they stretch thinking and shift from one idea to another
b) using self as a resource as they tap into themselves to find objects and define them
Behavioral Considerations (Plan ahead…what issues might arise/what strategies might help)
a) not wanting to participate – observation is a form of participation so if they would rather do something else and just watch, that is fine. If we make it fun, enough they will want to join in.
b) frustration about not finding item – when setting up, go through the list and make sure that all items are available and visible. If not, place items there. This should accommodate the issue, but it is also all right for children to be frustrated and work through it, so if it happens I would encourage them to breathe, tell me why they are frustrated, and then problem-solve ways to feel better.
c) children not sharing or participating as a group – be prepared to help facilitate group interactions and the "give and take" of relationships. All children should have opportunities to lead and to follow .
Documentation How will you collect and display the development listed above? (documentation board, classroom book, PowerPoint, Prezi, creative ideas, etc.)
Using the pen and paper (and photos if possible), I will write down what children said and did. I will place clipboard with those notes on the parent board, along with the following:
Today we went on a Nature Scavenger Hunt on the yard. Several children had been expressing an interest in the changes they are noticing in nature so we built upon this interest. As they explored they developed the following skills:
Physical:
a) fine motor as they pick up objects
b) gross motor as they bend, reach, walk,…
Cognitive:
a) classification as they sort by size, texture, color,…
b) number as they count their items
Language:
a) listening (receptive) as they listen to each other
b) talking (expressive) as they discuss their items with each other
Social/Emotional:
a) group skills such as taking turns, waiting, listening to others
b) sense of accomplishment as they find items and solve problems that may arise
Creative:
a) flexibility and fluency as they stretch thinking and shift from one idea to another
b) using self as a resource as they tap into themselves to find objects and define them
Here are some of the things they said and did. Be sure to ask your child about it and expand at home if you have the opportunity! We can't wait to hear what you come up with!
Webbing Ideas (List at least 5 activities to extend the learning into other areas; try to include one appropriate use of technology) (NAEYC Standard 5a)

1. Reading books on nature
2. Art / Painting with leaves and/or a nature collage
3. Cognitive / Additional sorting, classifying, graphing, nature lotto, etc.
4. Dramatic Play / Magnifying glasses, tree branches, nature collection bags (inside and / or outside)
5. Group Time/ Related songs, stories, movement activities
6. Snack Time / Sorting and classifying Trail Mix

Modifications to include ALL children (developmental delays, disabilities, cultural and linguistic diversities, etc.) (NAEYC Standard 4b, 4d & 5c)
a) have plastic gloves for children who may not like to sensory experiences of touching objects
b) create the list in English as well as the other languages used in the classroom
c) have pictures for each listed item for children who cannot yet read or who have a hearing impairment.
Inclusion of Parents/Families

1. Encourage parents to join us on the walk (help them understand how to facilitate the children's exploration rather than finding and gathering the items themselves)
2. Encourage parents who know a language other than English to include that language on the list
3. Using the documentation, encourage families to extend the hunt to their homes and share what they did

Other Notes / Considerations:

- Consider the weather, as an alternative, set up inside or wait
- Extend the activity with a nature collage activity later in the day on a large piece of contact paper that can be added to over the next few days.

Blank Example Daily Planning Form for

Daily Lesson Plan					
Date:			Class:		
Segment / Time	Activity with Brief Description	Materials & Considerations	Purpose / Learning / Development	Intentional Interactions & Conversations	Notes / Other

Add additional rows as needed

Sample Daily Planning Form

Daily Lesson Plan					
Date:			Class:		
Segment / Time	Activity with Brief Description	Materials & Considerations	Purpose / Learning / Development	Intentional Interactions & Conversations	Notes / Other
ARRIVAL 9:00 am	-Greet parents and children -Health check	-Familiarity with families	-Positive start to day -Smooth transition from home to school -Connecting with families -Sense of belonging -Basic health check	-Get down to children's level -Watch non-verbal language -Be present -"welcome", "So glad to see you", "You look…"	-Check with teacher to see how parents should be addressed
GREETING CIRCLE 9:10 am	-Sing good morning song -Discuss activities for the day	-CD -CD Player – cue up song ahead of time & check it is working -Carpet squares for children to sit on, placed in semi-circle as they arrive -samples or pictures of activities _be sure to know activities ahead of time	-Listening and speaking skills -Social skills (waiting, learning about peers,…) -Spatial relations (staying on carpet) -Problem solving (making choices)	-Be sure each child can see -Sit at their level -Give children time to respond -Validate each child's comments -Notice positive behavior -Encourage children to correct inaccurate words or tunes	-Discuss behavior strategies with teacher prior -Know activities -Know words to song
CENTERS 9:20 -10:15	ART: Bingo marker painting SCIENCE: Ooblick	ART: colored bingo markers, large coffee filters…place on table and encourage children to create SCIENCE: mix cornstarch and water in tub. Encourage children to wash their hands and then join in exploration. Add spoons, small rocks, and food color to mixture as desired.	-Foster creativity -Sense of self -Curiosity & problem solving -Fine motor skills -Social skills -Spatial relations (on, in, …)	-Allow children to do their own work -"tell me about", "you are working really hard on that" -Refer children to other children -"How does that feel?" -"What are some ideas?" "How could you solve that?" "Interesting"	Keep in mind E's sensory issues and provide rubber gloves or place materials in baggie if needed.
CLEAN UP 10:15	Transition warning and cleaning up classroom	Transition warning: 5 minutes until clean up time, 2 minutes until clean up time Finish up what you are doing Sing clean up song	-Self help skills -Fine & gross motor -Cognitive – time, matching, spatial, -Sense of pride -Sense of collaboration & community	"What will you clean up first" "Do you want to put away this or this" "You do one and then I will do one" "When we are done we can have snack	-Be sure to watch clock -Speak loudly -Follow through -Discuss strategies with teacher prior
SNACK 10:20	-Wash hands and sit at table -Fruit Kabobs	-Place "skewers" (skinny straws) and fruit on table on platters -Encourage children to make kabobs and then eat them	-Health & nutrition -Fine motor skills -Language skills (listen and discuss) -Cognitive (categorize, label,…)	-Sit with children -Informally extend discussions on fruit, colors, textures,…	-Check for allergies
OUTSIDE 10: 40 – 11:30	-After snack transition outside -OBSTACLE COURSE -STORY STATION -at end transition inside	Encourage children to participate if desired (if not, regular yard set up is available): OBSTACLE COURSE: Balls, bean bags, targets, rope balance beam, chalk drawn path, hula hoop STORY STATION: Books spread out on blanket under tree	- Gross motor skills - Fine motor skills -Eye hand coordination -Balance -Literacy -Social with peers and adults	-Encourage collaboration -Can you do it together" "Who would you like to do it with" -Sharing – "how will you decide who will have it first?' -"You tried hard" -"Let's do it together" -"Are there other ways to do it?' -"How should we put them away?"	-Be sure teacher is outside at all times. -Encourage children to use restroom before going out -Have plan for obstacle course but be flexible based on children's interests -Create cozy area for stories -Clean up transition at 11:30

CIRCLE 11:40	-Sit on carpet squares -CLASS BOOK - 3 BEARS RAP -FAREWELL SONG	-Encourage children to sit on carpet -CLASS BOOK: Adult starts "once upon a time" and then each child adds a sentence. Record on phone or chart paper and then transcribe later and add to book area -3 BEARS RAP – encourage children to participate in song and movements (use CD if needed) -Take 5 calming breaths -FAREWELL SONG (use CD if needed)	-Literacy skills -Taking turns -Sequencing -Gross and fine motor -Keeping a steady beat -Counting -Transitioning	-Make sure everyone can see -Speak clearly -Show joy in their sentences -Clarify before writing words down -Notice and appreciate patience -"you are waiting so nicely for your turn" -"it's hard to wait isn't it?' -"Feel your body getting calmer with your breaths". -"Think of your favorite thing today" (recap)	-As teacher or other team member to record story -Know words and movements to songs -Record teacher singing farewell song and practice
DEPARTURE 12:00	-Open door for parents -Share highlights of day -Debrief with teacher	-Check cubbies	-Transition from school to home -Connecting with families -Closure	-Smile and greet parents -Encourage children to share favorite part of day.	-Be sure to let teacher know of any issues -Reflect on day with team & celebrate!

Pause to Reflect
Do the example written planning forms make sense to you? What might you add or delete from the blank forms? Why?

What to plan

There are many resource websites and books with ideas to spark your initial planning. The best way to consider what to plan comes from the children. Always take into account WHO you are planning for and WHY you are planning. The rest will follow. In your ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education course, you will be presented with many considerations regarding what to plan. For now, the following is a general list to follow:

Considerations for planning:

- Consider both the group and individual children; be inclusive of all
- Know their interests
- Know their ability levels
- Focus on what they CAN do; start with where they are
- Understand your resources (time, materials, location,…)
- Understand development of the ages and stages you are planning for
- Plan for the "whole" child
- Know your goals and objectives
- Integrate curriculum and plan for all types of play
- Consider the families, communities and cultures represented
- Include others in the planning process when possible (colleagues, families, children)
- Plan ahead of time how to transition to the next segment of the day
- Jot down quick notes to refer to later when you reflect
- Don't worry if it doesn't go exactly as you planned, that's expected
- Enjoy yourself and the children, remember "this is the fun part"

Pause to Reflect
Do these implementation suggestions make sense to you? What might you add or delete from the suggestions? Why?

Another consideration will be how you will implement the activities you plan. There are several different teaching methods to think about and most teachers will balance various strategies throughout the day:

Child Directed – child introduces and directs activity
Child Demonstrated – child demonstrates while teacher observes
Assist – child explores and teacher provides minimal assistance
Scaffold – child attempts and teacher provides guided support as needed
Co-Construct – child and teacher or child and child work collaboratively
Teacher Demonstrated – teacher demonstrates while child observes
Teacher Directed – teacher introduces and directs activity

Figure 6.13 – The continuum of child-directed to teacher-directed. [78]

There is also a variety of experiences to consider:

- Structured – planned, organized lesson following steps
- Informal – planned and introduced and then takes shape as children participate
- Naturalistic – emerges organically from the children with no formal plan

Again, teachers balance these types of experiences throughout the day, based on the children they work with, the environment and the activities themselves.

Pause to Reflect
Which teaching strategies do you feel most comfortable with? Why? Can you see times when you might use each of them?

Review/Evaluation

The third part of the Plan-Do-Review cycle involves reflecting on what was planned and implemented. Remember the section in Chapter 3 (The Early Childhood Teaching Profession), regarding the importance of reflection in all aspects of our teaching? Curriculum planning is one of the primary duties teachers engage in, and as such requires a great deal of reflection and review. Some of this will be done informally as you go about your day. Other times it may be helpful to more formally reflect, in order to capture strengths and areas of growth, both in yourself, the children, and the curriculum that you are planning for them. As a form of "assessment", this feedback proves extremely valuable for teachers and programs. Below are examples of two types of forms teachers might use in their reviews. These will be used in future ECE courses at College of the Canyons.

Curriculum Implementation Evaluation / Reflection
A. Overall impression / comments about your activity (Be specific):
B. What went well?
C. What did not?
D. What type of interactions took place during the implementation of your activity?
(child – child, child – adult, …)
E. How did individual children respond to your implementation? Did they respond the way you anticipated? (Please be specific and use examples whenever possible)
F. If you were to implement this activity again, how would you modify it?
Think about: Encouraging more participation from the children
Meeting the needs of the wide range of developmental levels in the room
Implementing the plan more successfully
Additional activities to enhance the same concept(s) / webbing

Daily Curriculum Reflection
1) I am the proudest of:
2) I wish the following had been done differently:
3) The learning experiences I provided for the children:
4) The interactions, conversations, and approaches I used:
5) The biggest thing I learned about myself is:
6) Learning lessons about my teaching and goals I might set for myself:
7) Learning lessons about ethics and professionalism are:
8) Other

Pause to Reflect
Do these review/reflections make sense to you? What might you add or delete from the blank forms? Why?

Some programs will set up areas of the indoor and outdoor classroom with a variety of materials for children to choose from. Others will set up stations for children to participate in. Chapter 7 The Learning Environment will look specifically at setting up environments. Some portions of the day will include individual, small, and large group experiences. All should be carefully planned with intention and meaning for the children that will be engaging in them.

Integrated Curriculum / Themes

It is common for many programs to integrate many aspects of learning with the use of "themes" as a way to weave learning together for children. For some learners, the connection of several learning experiences all related to a common concept can support deeper learning. The most successful themes are those that emerge out of the children's interest (often called " emergent curriculum"). Common themes include:

- My family
- Friendship and caring
- Community Helpers
- Animals
- Activities (camping, …)
- Transportation
- Locations (oceans, mountains, farms,…)

Pause to Reflect
What other themes can you think of?

Often when planning a theme, teachers will use the concept of a curriculum "web" to begin to plan their ideas. Like a list, but in a different format, a web allows teachers to brainstorm related ideas and then to choose the ones that make the most sense to more thoroughly plan for. This process uses both a teacher's divergent and convergent thinking skills.

A basic web diagram will look like this:

Figure 6.14 – basic web diagram

Here is a sample of a curriculum web using this format. Can you think of activities to add?

Figure 6.15 – Sample curriculum web

Pause to Reflect
What advantages can you find in creating a planning web? How might you incorporate children into helping you web ideas?

The Behavioral Side of Curriculum

Rather than thinking of children's behavior as occurring separately from everything else that goes on in the classroom, it can be helpful to recognize that it is a part of everything else. As we plan interactions and experiences that are meaningful, we take into account a variety of factors that affect behavior. Part of every plan should be an understanding of who children are and intentionally planning for them. Just as with other skills that children are learning, they are learning to control their bodies, use their words, self-regulate, wait their turn, be patient, and a host of other social and emotional skills the will help them be able to manage themselves in social situations. Learning these life skills is no different from any other concept they will learn by exploring, repeated exposure, and having it make sense to them. As will other concepts, they need teachers who develop relationships with them, focus on what they CAN do, and maintain a positive attitude.

There is no magic approach to helping children learn to manage their behavior and no secret book with all of the answers. Instead, there are a variety of factors to consider and approaches to try to guide behaviors in the ways we prefer. This will be expanded upon in the ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum in Early Childhood Education, so what follows here is an abridged version of considerations as we plan for the children in our programs.

As early childhood professionals, we have an ethical obligation to understand how behavior is affected by the following factors and to plan accordingly. Just as we started Chapter 4 (Observation and Assessment) with looking at the "why", understanding why a child might be behaving in a certain way can assist in planning appropriately:

The "whys" of children's behavior teachers should consider:

- Development – what to expect at various ages and stage for the "whole" child
- Environment – the physical space, routine and interpersonal tone
- Family & Cultural Influences – influences and variations in expectations
- Temperament – individual personality styles, approaches, and ways of interpreting events
- Motivation – purpose (communicating, relating, attention, control, revenge, inadequacy, fear of failure,…)

Often teachers will use a web like the one previously described to consider the "why" of a behavior. They place the behavior in the center and then web out the various factors to consider.

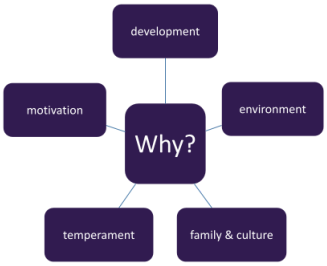


Figure 6.16 – Teachers should examine the "why" behind a behavior

	Pause to Reflect How might you use the information above when planning interactions and experiences for children?

Once we have an understanding of the "whys" of behavior, we can plan interactions that foster the behavior we desire. We will introduce you to guidance techniques in the ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum in Early Childhood Education. Here we have highlighted the following Interactive Strategies to consider.

Useful teacher interactions when planning for children's behavior (in addition to the interactive considerations posed earlier):

- Consistency
- Clarity
- Realistic limits and expectations
- Calmness
- Focus on the behavior, not the child
- Focus on what the child can do and is doing appropriately
- Positive direction (for example instead of "don't run" say "use walking feet")
- Reflection and logic rather than immediate response and emotion

Some strategies to try include:

- Ignore – can be effective if a behavior is annoying rather than dangerous.

"If you choose to continue using a whining voice I will choose not to listen. As soon as you use your talking voice, I would like to hear what you have to say"

- Redirect – directing the child to a more positive way of using that behavior.

"Inside we use our walking feet, when you go outside you can run" or "We don't throw things at other people, if you would like to throw let's find the target and beanbags"

- Active Listening to understand – validating what the child is saying.

"I hear you saying that you want a turn, you sound very sad" or "you worked very hard on that block structure and you are angry it got knocked over"

- Give Choices – state what needs to be done and then give 2 options for how it can be done.

"It's time to clean up now, will you clean up the paintbrushes or the paints first?" or "It's time to come inside now, do you want to come in like a mouse or a dinosaur?"

- Logical Consequences – as children behave in certain ways (both "positively" and "negatively") consequences will logically happen.

"If you talk to your friends in that tone, they may continue not to want to play with you. If you want to play with them, what can you do differently?" or "We are having snack now; if you choose not to eat you will probably be very hungry by lunchtime"

- Problem Solving/Conflict Resolution – helping children to solve their own issues with support as needed.

"What can you do about that?" or "How might you solve that problem" or "it sounds like you both want to play with the same toy, I wonder how you will work that out?"

- Short removal with reflection and return – taking a moment to leave a situation to gain composure and return more successfully.

"It seems to be hard for you to keep the sand in the sandbox right now. I'm going to ask you to leave the sandbox for a few moments and think about how you can be respectful to the others that are sharing this space with you. Where will you go to think?")A very brief time later) "what can you do differently next time you enter the sandbox? Great, would you like to try out your solution? Come on back and show me". "You did it!" [79]

	Pause to Reflect How might you use the information above when planning interactions and experiences for children? What makes sense? What feels comfortable to try?

Types of Programs

Many high quality programs using the tenants of Developmentally Appropriate Practices exist today. Most have integrated this information into an eclectic format, providing active learning, quality interactions and environments, and activities based on their observations of children's interests and abilities. They included families as partners and extend to value the communities and cultures of which they are a part. Below is a list of program and curriculum names that encompass the above tenants. They are all similar at their core, but if you would like to research them further you may find some unique components of interest to you. They are listed alphabetically for convenience:

- Culturally Appropriate Curriculum – curriculum that helps children understand how they are similar to, yet different than each other based on individual histories, families, and culture.

- Emergent Curriculum – curriculum planning based on teacher observations of children's interests. Usually, a spontaneous approach where experiences evolve and change as the process unfolds.
- Faith Based – programs that include the teaching of the religious beliefs of the sponsoring organization.
- Family Child Care – a program that takes place in a home setting.
- Head Start – A comprehensive program, that provides learning programs; nutrition; medical, dental, and mental health care, and parent education and vocational training.
- High-Scope – named for a program High in Quality, Broad in Scope, this curriculum emphasizes active learning and higher-level thinking. It includes a Plan-Do-Review cycle where children learn to make plans, carry them out, and then evaluate those plans; important life-skills.
- Inclusion – programs designed to include children with a wide variety of abilities and needs.
- Inclusive Curriculum – the aspect of a program that reflect sensitivity to culture, home language, gender, religion, and abilities.
- Intergenerational Programs – programs designed for both young children and the elderly, where the two populations interact throughout the day in similar activities.
- Laboratory Schools – early childhood programs taking place on college campuses, usually with a supervised training component for college students learning to work with young children.
- Looping – the practice of keeping a group of children and their teacher together for more than one year.
- Montessori – True Montessori schools are based on the works of Maria Montessori including self-correcting materials, independent learning experiences, and an emphasis on life skills. Because her name was not trademarked, many programs that have Montessori in the title do not meet all of the criteria of a true Montessori program, which can be very confusing indeed.
- Mixed Age Grouping – also called “family grouping”’ placing children of different ages in the same classroom.
- Outdoor Classroom – outdoor spaces created to enhance the quantity, quality and benefit of outdoor experiences. Often brings the inside classroom outside, incorporating interest centers and materials usually found indoors.
- Parent Cooperative (Co-op) – a program designed and run by a group of parents for their young children. Parents will usually hire a teacher to facilitate learning and perform all other duties themselves. More recently called “Learning Pods”.
- Play based – focuses on the value of play in fostering development in young children, planning interactions and experiences focused on the many types of play.
- Reggio-Emilia – this approach is a student-centered and constructive self-guided curriculum that uses self-directed, experiential learning in relationship-driven environments, often through a “project approach”.
- RIE (Resources for Infant Educarers) – based on Magda Gerber’s work with babies, emphasizes the unique stage of infants and toddlers. Curriculum for this age is caring for them, with the belief that caring educates infants about themselves. [80]

Pause to Reflect
Which of the programs just mentioned spark your interest? Why?

In Closing

As can be seen, there is much to consider when planning, implementing, and evaluating curriculum for early childhood programs. At the core of quality curriculum is the notion of Developmentally Appropriate Practices, including observing and understanding the individual children in your care, developing and maintaining positive relationships and interactions, effectively communicating, valuing the role of play in learning, and understanding that children’s behavior is a part of the learning process.

In Chapter 7 (Learning Environments), we will explore how the environment sets the stage for children and families to feel engaged and supported in their early learning classroom.

Pause to Reflect
Thinking back over the chapter, what are 3 main concepts that stand out for you? Why? How will you use them?

References

Chapter 7 – Creating an Effective Learning Environment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand various program types, delivery systems, quality standards, licensing and regulation structures in early childhood settings.
- Define and describe the difference between the physical, social, and temporal environments of an early learning program
- Describe why a well-designed physical, social, and temporal environment benefits young children

NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

Standard 1: Promoting child development and learning

Standard 4: Using Developmentally Effective Approaches with Children and Families

Standard 5: Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

The following competencies are addressed in this chapter:

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance
- Special Needs and Inclusion
- Family and Community Engagement

National Association for the Education of Young Children Code (NAEYC) of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: – I-1.1, I-1.2, I-1.5, I-1.8, I-1.11

Principles: P-1.1, P-1.2, P-1.7, P-1.11

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

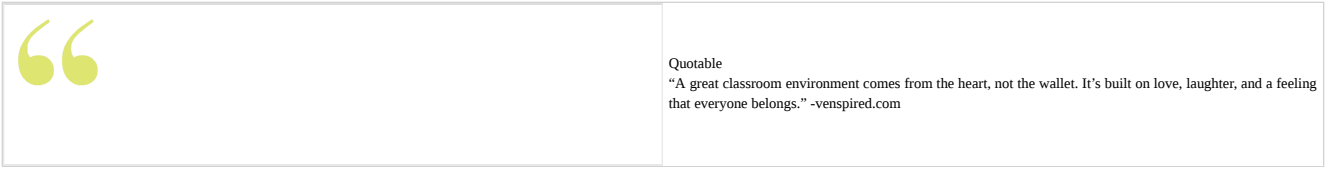
Principles: P-2.1, P-2.2

Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Ideals: I-4.1 (individual), I-4.6

Preview

As we have learned in previous chapters, developing relationships, as well as understanding the developmental stages and individual interests and skills of children is crucial to effective teaching. This is accomplished through interactions and both informal and formal observations with the children in our care. This information will form the cornerstone of what is called "curriculum", which includes both the planned and unplanned experiences that occur throughout the day. While you will devote an entire course to understanding curriculum in ECE 104 (Introduction to Curriculum in Early Childhood), we will visit some of the basic concepts below.



THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AS THE THIRD TEACHER

The environment affects every aspect of how children develop and learn and how teachers teach. In the article Inspired by Reggio Emilia: Emergent Curriculum in Relationship-Driven Learning Environments , Mary Ann Biermeier summarizes Loris Malaguzzi's concept of the third teacher :

"…the environment plays a central role in the process of making learning meaningful. So important was this notion, that Malaguzzi defined the environment as the third teacher (Gandini 2011). Malaguzzi's third teacher is a flexible environment, responsive to the need for teachers and children to create learning together. Fostering creativity through the work of young hands manipulating objects or making art, it is an environment that reflects the values we want to communicate to children. Moreover, the classroom environment can help shape a child's identity as a powerful player in his or her own life and the lives of others. To foster such an environment, teachers must go deeper than what is merely seen at eye level and develop a deep understanding of the underlying principles and of children's thinking, questions, and curiosities." [81]

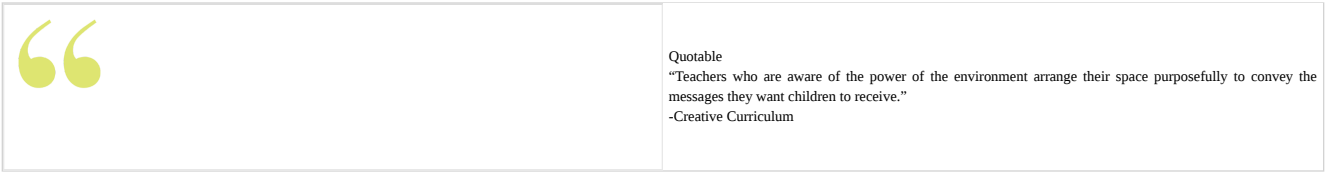
Key Components for Creating Early Childhood Environments

According to the California Preschool Program Guidelines (2015) "The teacher's intentional design of the learning environment increases opportunities for children to have engaging and meaningful interactions with adults and peers. Along with interactions, instruction, learning activities, and routines, the learning environment is a central part of preschool teachers' planning and implementation of curriculum (p. 120). [82] Therefore, when an intentional teacher is setting up the learning environment, we need to consider a combination of conditions. More specifically, we think about three key aspects: the physical environment , social-emotional environment , and temporal environment (Gordon and Browne, 2016). [83] We will examine each component more carefully as we read on.

Table 7.1: Relationship between Development and Learning

Component	Description
Physical Environment	How the physical space is designed and laid out, both inside and outside. This includes the learning centers/areas, furniture and equipment, and materials.
Social-Emotional Environment	The interactions and relationships between children, teachers, and family members.
Temporal Environment	The flow of time, including the timing, sequence, and length of routines and activities throughout the day.

Because developing relationships are at the core of our practices, Dodge, Colker, and Heroman's The Creative Curriculum recommends we begin by thinking about the messages we send in our programs.



They recommend that we focus on embedding these positive messages:

- "This is a good place to be."
- "You belong here."
- "This is a place you can trust."
- "There are places where you can be by yourself when you want."
- "You can do many things on your own here."
- "This is a safe place to explore and try your ideas." [84]

Let's Take a Closer Look at the Physical Environment

The term physical environment refers to the overall layout of the indoor and outdoor space that children and teachers will use - this includes the furniture and equipment, the materials and centers, the entryway and walkways, and even the lighting, floor and ground covering, and wall decor. As suggested by the California Preschool Program Guidelines (2015), "High-quality indoor and outdoor learning environments set the stage for social-emotional exploration and growth. When we present children with a friendly, inviting, and culturally familiar environment, they feel comfortable and secure (pp.172-3). [85] In other words, the physical environment sends a clear message to children and their families that they matter, and that their safety and well-being are valued.

Designing Physical Environment

Designing a functional floor plan requires careful thought. Teachers usually want to create an aesthetically appealing space that is safe, comfortable, and practical. They need to work within the parameters of the age levels of the children they will serve, the building and outdoor space they have at hand, the cultural context of the families and community, and the regulations they must adhere to, such as those of Title 22.

Figure 7.1 – Written floor plan [86]

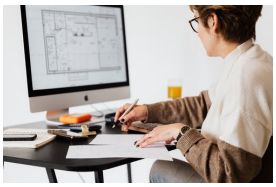


Figure 7.2 – Graphic floor plan [87]

Creating a functional written floor plan of the inside and outside space is a valuable starting place. The same principles that applied to planning curriculum will apply to planning spaces. Having a written plan allows us to frame our thoughts and ideas and to modify them easily. Some teachers prefer to sketch on paper while others prefer a digital approach. Once we have a general sketch of the space, we can:

- Refer to the description of the ages and stages that will be in the space to get a better understanding of what development we are planning for. Begin with a broad plan since we usually do not know individual children yet. As we get to know them, we modify as needed.
- Consider the community and cultural context of our families and be sure to reflect that in our design.
- Think about safety and health concerns.
- Consider the large pieces of furniture and equipment that may not be easily moved.
- Consider the types of play and exploration that will take place and plan areas for each.
- Consider the materials needed for these areas and how they will be stored and made available to children.
- Consider transitions between areas.
- Consider lighting, flooring, ground cover, bulletin boards, etc.

Teacher Tip
"Get down on your knees to view the space from a child's perspective. This practice helps teachers create an aesthetically appealing space at the children's eye-level. Also, to ensure safety, stand in every corner of the classroom to scan the room for visibility. As noted in Title 22, for proper supervision, children must be visible to their teachers at all times, teachers should likewise be visible to their children. [88]

Figure 7.3 Early Childhood Indoor Environment [89]

Setting Up Learning Centers, Play Spaces, and Other Areas

As you begin to set up what you have planned, you might want to ask yourself some of these questions:

- Does the entryway look attractive and feel welcoming?
- Is there a family board to keep families informed and included?
- Is there an individual space for each child to keep belongings?
- How is the lighting?
- How does it smell?
- Are the active spaces away from the quiet spaces to maintain a reasonable noise level?
- Is there a cozy space where children can have privacy and a place to rest and recharge?
- Are all the developmental domains represented – Physical, Cognitive, Language, Social, Emotional, Spiritual?
- Are the materials age-appropriate and are there enough materials available?
- Is the space well organized and not overwhelming or chaotic?
- Are there clear pathways to the exits in case of an emergency?
- Are outlets covered, hand washing available and other safety concerns addressed?
- Would I want to be here as a child? Would I want my child here as a parent?

To set the stage for exploration and learning there are a variety of activity areas that will interest the children and promote all types of play to foster development and learning. To support the development of the whole child, the preschool framework suggests the following learning centers to consider both inside and outside:

- Art
- Blocks
- Dramatic Play
- Library and Literacy
- Math
- Science and Nature
- Music and Movement
- Computer Lab

Additional areas to incorporate when setting up your environment may include:

- Eating Area
- Gathering Area or Circle Time Space

- Bathroom and Sink
- Kitchen Area or Food Prep Space
- Space to rest

(Note: Before you set up your environment, you will want to review the regulations as outlined in California's Community Care Licensing Division. Title 22 stipulates the health and safety standards for licensed early childhood programs- including square footage requirements for indoor and outdoor environments.)

Furniture and equipment to consider:

- Child-size tables and chairs
- Adult-sized chairs
- Cubbies for personal belongings
- Shelves
- Storage containers for materials
- Materials and props
- Throw rugs, Carpets and blankets
- Safety mats
- Trash cans
- First Aid

Figure 7.4 – Infant indoor environment [90]

While most of the suggestions listed above can be used for every age group, the number and types of materials will vary depending on the ages and stages of the children we are planning for.

Pause to Reflect
How might you modify the suggestions above for various age groups?

1. Infant
2. Toddler
3. Preschool
4. School-age

When arranging your centers and spaces here are some tips:

- Design spaces for children to work and play independently or in small groups.
- Set up an area where the class can gather together as a community.
- Consider the number and size of centers. Make sure there are enough materials for children to be engaged in without being crowded and to minimize long wait times.
- Incorporate a management system that regulates how many children can be in a center at one time.
- Label your centers and spaces and include photos.
- Materials should be age appropriate and readily available to the children.
- Keep in mind that everything that is done inside can be set up outside as well.
- Because children respond positively to nature, outdoors is a perfect opportunity to promote all types of play, promoting exploration, development, and learning.

Figure 7.5 Preschool Outside Environment [91]

A Bit More About the Outdoors

A variety of equipment can be purchased to expand children's experiences outside, although a large budget is not required to create high quality outdoor spaces for young children. Programs may choose to provide a playground made of natural materials to immerse children in nature as well.

The following describe high quality outdoor spaces for children

- There is adequate space for gross motor play.
- The space is easily accessible and well organized so activities do not interfere with one another.
- The following materials are included:
- Stationary equipment (such as swings, slides, climbing equipment).
- Portable equipment (such as wheeled toys, mats, jump ropes, bean bags, balls).
- Equipment that stimulates balancing, climbing, ball play, steering, tumbling, jumping, throwing, and pedaling.

- The equipment provides skill development at multiple levels.
- There is enough equipment that children do have to wait long to play
- The equipment is in good repair
- The equipment is appropriate for the age and ability of the children
- Adaptations are made for children with disabilities [92]

Teacher Tip

The article Heavily Decorated Classrooms Disrupt Attention and Learning (2014), suggests that "too much of a good thing may end up disrupting attention and learning in young children." Children who spend a large portion of their day in highly decorated classrooms can be more distracted and spend less time on-task when compared to their counterparts who were in classrooms with minimal and organized décor.

To help reduce clutter on the walls, you can use documentation boards to showcase what your children are learning in your classroom. Select a specific activity that you will highlight. Showcase actual work samples along with quotes from the children and descriptions of the development and learning that took place. When children see their work on display, they can feel a sense of belonging and pride. Families feel a connection as they view what their children are doing in their second home. As you finish with each board you can collect them for future reference and memories

In addition to showcasing what children are experiencing, you may want to use some type of poster to display daily schedules, basic routines (e.g., hand washing), and diverse images of children and families, basic learning concepts, and classroom expectations. These types of visual aids can help young children adapt to their environment more efficiently.

Another strategy that can help children develop their independence is the use of labels. For example, in the block area, the teacher can laminate labels onto the shelf indicating where all the blocks belong. Labels may include photos, drawings, and words in the languages familiar to the children. This strategy not only keeps the center more organized; it also provides children with the opportunity to clean up with minimal directions or adult supervision and encourages the use of many cognitive and motor skills.

Family photos are another way to decorate walls in a meaningful way for children and families. Inviting each family to bring a photo (or taking them at the school) and posting them prominently brings a sense of belongingness and community to the environment. Don't forget the teacher's families too! [93]

Children construct their own knowledge about the world they live in. Therefore, as intentional teachers it is our job to give them the tools and resources that they will need to be successful as they explore, examine, investigate, interact, and problem solve. It is our job to set the stage. It is our job to ensure that each center has a purpose and that the physical environment provides enough space to invoke possibilities and opportunities for learning and safe risk taking.

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE SOCIAL – EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

According to the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, "s ocial development refers to a child's ability to create and sustain meaningful relationships with adults and other children, whereas, emotional development refers to a child's ability to express, recognize, and manage his or her emotions, as well as respond appropriately to others' emotions." Not only is the social-emotional environment important for a child's health and well-being, but it also provides a solid foundation for lifelong learning and interactions with others. [94]

A Closer Look at the Social Environment

The social environment is comprised of all the interactions that occur throughout the day. A well-designed social environment fosters trusting relationships by creating opportunities for children to interact with their peers and with their teachers. Effective teacher-child interactions are one of the most crucial ingredients for both social and whole child development. Experts in the field of early childhood education have long understood that effective teacher-child interactions are key predictors of student success.

Figure 7.6 Warm Interpersonal Interaction [95]

To create a classroom environment that supports positive social interactions Gordon and Browne (2016) suggest that teachers evaluate the quality of their interpersonal interactions. Take a moment to review the self-check questions.

Self-Check: Questions to ask yourself about your social-emotional environments

- Is there a feeling of mutual respect between the adults and children?
- Are the children interacting with one another?
- Am I modeling cooperative behavior?
- Am I planning activities that encourage peer interactions?
- What are my facial expressions, and what tone do I use when I talk to the children?
- Do I give genuine feedback and praise for their achievements?
- Am I spending quality time with all the children?
- When I'm feeling frustrated, do I take it out on the children?
- Do I allow the children to solve their own problems, or do I try to fix everything myself?
- When I need to talk to a child, do I get down to their level?
- Do I greet families with a smile and do I make an effort to connect with each family?
- At the end of the day when the child is being picked up, do I share a pleasant anecdote about the child's day or do I focus only on challenging moments?
- Do I provide opportunities for the children to help with daily tasks?
- Do I have opportunities for families to volunteer and be involved? [96]

The Emotional Environment

Young children are just learning how to regulate their emotions and behaviors and they need your guidance and support. Exactly what kind of support can you give a child? Co-regulation is defined as warm and responsive interactions that provide children with the support, coaching, and modeling that they need to express their feelings, wants, needs, actions, and behaviors. Co-regulation is an interactive process where teachers must know when to step in and when to step back. Teachers must pay close attention to each child's cues so that they can respond in a consistent and sensitive manner. [97]

To develop caring and responsive relationships with the children in your classroom, it is helpful to learn about each child's unique temperament and communication styles, their likes and dislikes, their strengths, and the areas where they need further support. Only through on-going observation and documentation will you truly discover what makes each child so special.

Figure 7.7 Teacher displaying a warm interpersonal tone [98]

Once you know each child's unique cues and personalities you will be able to address their individual needs and meet them where they are at developmentally. Additionally, you will be able to plan learning experiences that will help children develop their "self-regulation skills. " Self-regulation is having the ability to control your behavior, actions, and emotions in response to a particular situation. In other words, it's having the power to calm yourself down when you get upset because things didn't quite go your way. When children can share their toys with their friends, wait their turn to ride the bike, and can use their words to express their feelings, they are practicing self-regulation.

Take a moment to review the self-check questions and think about ways you can support a child's emotional development.

Self-Check: Questions to ask yourself

- Are there cozy spaces for children to take a break?
- Are their puppets, dolls, and other activities that encourage children to express feelings?
- Do we sing songs and read book about feelings?
- Do I provide verbal prompts that help children express their wants and needs?
- Am I aware of each child's temperament?
- Am I aware of my own feelings and reactions when I am stressed?
- Have I taught children effective strategies to help calm them down when upset?

Creating Your Social-Emotional Environment

Research suggests that for children to thrive, they must first have their "basic needs" met. These "basic needs" are highlighted in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Chapter 2 (Developmental and Learning Theories). Once a child feels safe, secure, loved, and that they belong, they will be ready to learn. As an intentional teacher, it is up to you to create a social and emotional climate where children are comfortable enough to develop meaningful relationships and safe enough to explore their environment. In the article, Creating an Emotional Safe Classroom , Dr. Bruce Perry states, "Optimal learning is driven by curiosity which leads to exploration, discovery, practice, and mastery. In turn, mastery leads to pleasure, satisfaction, and confidence to once again explore. The more a child experiences this cycle of wonder, the more they can create a lifelong excitement and love of learning." [99]

A well-planned learning environment starts with you. When you create a positive social and emotional environment, children will feel secure. Once they feel secure and can trust that you will meet their needs, they will begin to explore the materials and interact with one another, and ultimately they will enjoy the environment you have prepared for them. Your classroom environment plays a critical role in helping children develop their social and emotional skills. Designing a welcoming classroom that promotes cooperation, mutual respect and tolerance will help children connect with you and with each other. To integrate responsive caregiving practices here are some teacher tips to help you set up an engaging social-emotional environment:

- Be responsive to children's needs. To help children feel more confident and secure, first meet their basic needs. Provide each child with warm, caring interactions that can be later modeled.
- Provide Prompts. Partner with children to manage their feelings and frustrations. Give them the words to express their feelings and to solve their own problems.
- Use your positive personality as a teaching tool. Your smile, your voice, and your touch, along with direct eye contact can make children and their families feel safe and cared for.
- Be predictable. Establish clear expectations and follow through. Children need consistent boundaries and need to know they can count on you for guidance.
- Find time for quiet moments. Solitude allows the brain to "catch up" and process the new experiences of the day. This leads to better consolidation of new experiences and better teaming.
- Praise when possible. Confidence and pleasure come from success. Everyone succeeds at something. Those with challenging behaviors need to know they can be successful too. Be observant. As you watch and listen you will gather useful information about each child. Watch to see what the children are curious about: What types of activities interest them? How are they feeling? What are their pressure points? When you follow their cues and respond to their needs, you can then plan for meaningful learning opportunities.
- Celebrate diversity and help all children feel included . Encourage children to communicate and express themselves. At times, they may feel more comfortable using their home language, body movements, gestures, signs, or drawing a picture. Plan activities that provide opportunities for children to work together as partners or in small groups. Assign a buddy to assist children that are new to the program or that may be struggling to stay engaged and on task. Encourage families to share.
- Include both teacher-initiated and child-initiated activities . Teacher-initiated activities are planned and led by the teacher, while child-initiated activities are inspired by the children's own interests and abilities. Materials are set out and children are encouraged to explore and create using their own ideas. [100] , [101]

Pause to Reflect
How would you promote social-emotional well-being for each age group?

1. Infant
2. Toddler
3. Preschool
4. School-age

The skilled and intentional teacher creates a classroom climate that promotes cooperation, mutual respect, and tolerance. The Teaching Pyramid Framework for Supporting Social Competence provides a model for promoting social competence and preventing challenging behaviors. [102]

Figure 7.8 – The Teaching Pyramid [103]

Pause to Reflect
How does "Spiritual Development" or the concept of "me-ness" and "you-ness" for children fit into the Social-Emotional environment?

Assessing Teacher Interactions

In ECE 103 (Observation and Assessment) you will look more closely at The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed at the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning as an assessment tool to improve teacher-student interactions and, ultimately, enhance student development and learning. It is used in many early childhood programs to support teacher's growth. The CLASS tool describes three broad categories focusing on the way teachers are providing emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support to meet the needs of the children they work with. The tool looks at the following:

Pause to Reflect
You are an important part of the social-emotional environment and you need to take time for you. Every job has stress factors and being an early childhood teacher is no different. To have the positive energy you will need to manage a classroom, you should find healthy outlets to help manage your own needs and emotions.
What do you do to manage stress and maintain your emotional well-being?
Experiment and discover what works for you. Ideally, you will be able to model these techniques to the children. By providing children with a calm, peaceful, and nurturing atmosphere they will feel safe and secure in their social-emotional environment. And, you will have peace of mind.

Let's Take a Closer Look at the Temporal Environment

Quotable
The most precious resource we all have is time. How will we use it? - Steve Jobs

Before your head hit the pillow last night and you fell fast asleep, what did you do? Did you brush your teeth? Did you take a shower? Did you read a book, watch TV or listen to some music? Would you say what you did last night followed the same routine that you do every night or was it unusual? How do you feel when you follow a regular routine? How do you feel when life throws you a curveball and nothing is as it should be? Now, imagine how a child might feel if every day they had to adjust to a new routine; if they never knew what to expect from one day to the next. Imagine how a child might feel if there was a predictable pattern to follow and if they always knew what was coming next.

According to Gordon and Browne (2016), the temporal environment has to do with the scheduling, timing, sequence, and length of routines and activities that take place at home and at school. With predictable schedules, routines, and transitions there is a sense of safety security. With a steady schedule and regular routines, children will be able to adapt to their environment as well as adjust to a new situation that may arise much more quickly. It also frees them up to be able to focus on the task at hand rather than worrying about how much longer they have or what will come next. [104]

The terms routines and schedules are often used interchangeably. Schedules and routines are utilized in preschool classrooms to:

- Help guide the day.
- Communicate to everyone what is happening and when.
- Foster engagement.
- Meet the needs of children to explore, persist, and elaborate.
- Promote a safe and fun place to learn and grow.

Figure 7.10 – An example schedule [105]

Some considerations about daily routines/schedules include:

- They are a series of behaviors that occur on a regular basis
- Expectations for routines need to be planned and then taught to children.
- Created for developing and learning
- The amount of time for each block will vary and should be flexible.
- Most early childhood program routines include:

- Arrival and Departure
- Group or circle time
- Activities
- Center or free choice time
- Snack time and meals
- Outdoor time
- Transitions between blocks of time

- They are sequenced – to create a flow of the day
- Choice should be incorporated whenever possible.
- They are balanced in terms of:

- Active/quiet
- Individual/small/large group
- Teacher-directed/child-initiated activities
- Noise level, pace, and location

- Teachers should be in tune with children's needs and engagement and be flexible.
- Shorten or lengthen blocks of time as needed.
- Plan for transitions as carefully as the segments of the routine themselves.
- Posting a routine provides a visual reminder for children.

Figure 7.10 – More examples of schedules and routines [106]

Incorporating Transitions into your Curriculum

	Quotable "Life is one big transition." - Willie Stargell

Transition is another word for change, and change can be challenging. The biggest transition children will experience each day with you is arrival and dismissal, when they move from one of their most important life spaces to another.

All routines include transitioning from one segment to the next. Every transition affords the opportunity to flow smoothly from one experience into the next or to become chaotic and stressful for children and teachers alike. Planning for each transition during the day is as important as planning the experiences themselves. With careful planning and flexibility, we can help children leave their present moment gently and purposefully, moving to the next adventure that awaits them.

Teacher Tip: Planning for Transitions

- Make sure the children understand the routine and that they will move from segment to segment
- Give a warning at least 5 minutes before a big transition and then again as it approaches
- Be sure to let them know what is coming next
- Use clear signals (flashing lights, ringing a bell, singing a song, etc.) and keep it consistent for that segment each day.
- Establish clear expectations about clean up time and mealtime transitions.
- Have all daily materials prepped and ready before children arrive.
- Create a calm atmosphere during transitions.
- Make transitions fun with games of cleaning up, moving in different ways
- If possible eliminate or at least limit the amount of time children must wait between segments.

How does the Temporal Environment Benefit Children?

Each child in your class is unique. When you provide a structured schedule with predictable routines and consistent transitions, you are creating a safe and secure environment where all children can thrive. Be providing clear expectations, you will help children adjust to their surroundings, adapt to the daily schedule and routine, and feel more comfortable knowing what comes next. Once they are comfortable in their setting, children will socialize with their peers, and they will use materials in a more meaningful way. Additionally, when the daily routine is consistent and predictable children are more likely to:

- Feel more confident to explore, create and take risks
- Stay on task and complete activities
- Be more engaged in learning activities and play
- Gain a sense of belonging
- Develop autonomy and independence
- Play more cooperatively and have fewer incidents

Here a few reminders when setting up your temporal environment:

- Post two daily schedules: one for the children down at their eye level, and one for their families on the Family Board
- State clear expectations and provide positive reinforcement
- Review the schedule regularly and adjust as needed based on the needs of the children.
- Keep routines consistent however, be prepared to make changes if necessary.
- Include visuals prompts (photos) on your daily schedule so children can track their day.

Creating an Inclusive Environment

In an Executive Summary, the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services (2015) defines inclusion in early childhood programs as “including children with disabilities in early childhood programs together with their peers without disabilities, holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations, and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their cognitive, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional development; friendships with peers; and sense of belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with the mildest disabilities to those with the most significant disabilities.” [107] When planning your environment, be mindful that some of your children might require some additional considerations to fully participate in all the scheduled activities, routines, and learning experiences.

Partnering with families, some accommodations for children with special needs might include:

- Provide schedules with pictures for children who need visual reminders of the daily sequence of activities.
- Be flexible with the schedule; allow children more time to complete transitions and activities as needed
- Have alternative activities for those children with medical conditions or physical impairments who might have less stamina and tire more easily across the day.
- Pair children up to help each other during transitions.
- Allow for regular breaks.
- Partner with families to coordinate the child’s daily schedule and routines, and to communicate progress.
- Modify chairs to meet children’s needs (you can use tennis balls on the bottom of the chair for noise control or to make the chairs slide more easily)
- Put carpet squares, cushions, or a tape line on the floor to indicate where children should sit or stand
- Modify materials to make them easier for children with motor difficulties to hold and use (e.g., using pencil grips, large knobs)
- Provide specialized equipment (e.g., built-up handled spoons, adaptive scissors) to help children be more independent

Pause to Reflect

Can you see how we might make accommodations for a certain child that might benefit other children or the entire group? All children have needs that are special and we plan for each to help them feel safe, comfortable, and included.

Evaluating the Environment

Once you have created your ideal early learning environment, it is suggested that you evaluate it on an on-going basis to make sure it is continuously meeting the needs of the children using it. A tool that is used extensively to assess and evaluate childcare programs is the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). The Environment Rating Scales were designed to offer guidelines for high-quality practices. According to ERS, a quality program must provide for the three basic needs all children have:

- Protection of their health and safety
- Building positive relationships
- Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience

The ERS further states, that “no one component is more or less important than the others, nor can one substitute for another. It takes all three to create quality care. Each of the three basic components of quality care manifests itself in tangible forms in the program's environment, curriculum, schedule, supervision, and interaction, and can be observed.” [108]

There are 4 Environment Rating Scales depending on the type of program being assessed:

- The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale

The ECERS scales consists of 35 items organized into 6 subscales:

- Space and Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Language and Literacy
- Learning Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure

You will learn more about this tool in ECE 103 (Observation and Assessment), but for further exploration now you can visit https://www.ersi.info

behavior affected by environments

Pause to Reflect
Can the environment influence a child's behavior? Take a moment to reflect on the following scenarios:

1. In an infant room where some of the children are walking and some are not, teachers have placed the immobile babies on soft blankets in the middle of the room. Activities for the mobile children are placed on the outside areas of the space. As the children waddle from one experience to another they step on the babies on the blankets.
2. A group of children is in the block area building some tall structures. "TIMBER!" one child shouts out loud, while the other 4 children clap their hands. The teacher looks at her watch and without a transition warning, the teacher yells "clean up time." The children run to another area.
3. There are 2 children at the easel boards painting. One child is waiting for her turn and says, "PLEASE hurry up – I've been waiting a long time." As one child is finishing her artwork, she drops some paint and the paintbrush on the floor and leaves it there. With paint on her hands, she holds her hands up high and walks all the way across the classroom to the bathroom to wash her hands, tracking a little paint along the way. The girl who was waiting picks up the paintbrush and begins to paint – she too steps in the paint on the floor. The teacher quickly grabs a towel and begins to wipe up the floor and sternly asks the children to please be careful.

What environmental changes might you make?

As demonstrated in the scenarios, a poorly arranged physical setting, transitions that are not well planned, and quick teacher responses can trigger challenging behaviors. Both teachers and children can become frustrated. By altering floor plans, planning for each segment of the day, and thinking through the communication and interactions we will have with children, we can avoid many challenging behaviors.

All three aspects of the environment; physical space, social-emotional tone, and routine can affect children's behavior. The environment sends very powerful messages about how to behave and feel.

Below is a chart of environmental modifications we can make to minimize certain behaviors by Dodge, Colker, and Heroman. [109]

Table 7.2: Environmental Modifications to Minimize Behaviors

Behavior	Possible Causes	Changes to the Environment
Running in the classroom	Too much space is open; the room is not divided into small enough areas; activity areas are not well defined.	Use shelves and furniture to divide the space. Avoid open spaces that encourage children to run.
Fighting over toys	Too many popular toys are one-of-a-kind; children are asked to share too often.	Provide duplicates of toys. Show children when it will be their turns (e.g., use a sand timer or help children create a waiting list for turns).
Wandering around, inability to choose activities	The room is too cluttered; choices are not clear; there is not enough to do, too much time.	Get rid of clutter. Simplify the layout of the room and materials. Add more activity choices. Revisit schedule.
Becoming easily distracted; not staying with a task	Areas are undefined and open; children can see everything going on in the room; materials are too difficult or children are bored with them.	Use shelves to define areas. Separate noisy and quiet areas. Assess children's skills and select materials they can use in interesting ways.
Continually intruding on other's workspace	Space is limited; poor traffic patterns prevent children from spreading out.	Define work areas for children (e.g., use masking tape or sections of cardboard for block building, and provide trays or placemats for toys). Limit the number of areas open at one time to allow more space for each.
Misusing materials and resisting clean up	Children do not know how to use materials appropriately; materials on shelves are messy; the displays are disorderly.	Make a place for everything. Use picture and word labels to show where materials go. Provide consistent guidance on how to clean up.

Pause to Reflect
The chart above focuses on the effect the physical environment has on behavior. Can you think of ways the social-emotional and temporal environments affect behavior as well?

In Closing

The physical spaces, the tone we set, and the routines we follow will have a major impact on the children we work with. By planning based on their ages and stages, individual strengths and family, cultural and community backgrounds we can create warm, secure spaces where children can engage in all types of learning through play, take safe risks, and maximize their learning and development.

The environment is certainly a strong influence on a child's experiences in our program; considered the "third teacher" with all that it offers. In the next and final chapter of this book, we will explore the child's "first teacher", the family, and the ways that we can collaborate to make the most of a child's learning experiences between the child's two most important worlds, home and school.

References

Chapter 8 – Partnering with Families

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Examine effective relationships and interactions between early childhood professionals, children, families, and colleagues, including the importance of collaboration.

NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

Standard 1: Promoting child development and learning

Standard 2: Building family and community relationships

Standard 5: Using content knowledge to build meaningful curriculum

Standard 6: Becoming a professional

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

The following competencies are addressed in this chapter:

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Dual Language Development
- Family and Community Engagement

- Professionalism
- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals 2.1 – 2.9

Principles 2.1 – 2.15

Preview

This chapter examines how we, as early childhood professionals, create important relationships with families to build effective home-school relationships. As a professional, we need to include families at the center of the work we do with their children. Valuing the input of families creates a sense of belonging that promotes success in school and home.

Unity Poem
I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there,
The clay they used was a young child's mind
And they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher; the tools she used were books and music and art;
One was a parent with a guiding hand and a gentle loving heart.
And when at last their work was done
They were proud of what they had wrought.
For the things they had shaped into the child
Could never be sold or bought.
And each agreed she would have failed
If each had worked alone
For behind the parent stood the school,
And behind the teacher; the home.
-Anonymous

Working with Families

While most early childhood professionals choose to go into this field because they want to work with children, it is important to understand that those children come with families. Those families are the child's first teacher and play a crucial role throughout that child's life. In the early years, there will be much interaction between the child's home and school environments and the important people in each.

In Chapter 1 (Theories), you may have noticed that the majority of the theories presented focused on the individual child and their development from "within". Constructing knowledge; meeting basic needs; developing a sense of trust. These are all very important. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model took a different approach and looks at developmental influences outside of the child, and how they impact who the child becomes. One very important system is the child's family. Children develop within the context of their families and the community that supports those families. As early childhood professionals, we build meaningful partnerships with the families of the children in our programs to ensure that their families are respected and valued in our program.

What is a Family?

In its most basic terms, a family is a group of individuals who share a legal or genetic bond, but for many people, family means much more, and even the simple idea of genetic bonds can be more complicated than it seems. [110] In your work with children, you will encounter many different types of family systems. All as unique as the individual children that are part of them, and all needing to feel that they can trust one of their most valuable assets to you.

Pause to Reflect
Think about your family of origin. What did they "teach" you? How did they "shape" you? How important were they in who you are today? How does this relate to the families of the children you will work with?

Ethical Responsibilities to Families

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011) "families are of primary importance in children's development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration (the three C's) between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child's development." [111]

The code consists of ideals and principles that we must adhere to as ethical professionals. The ideals (refer to the Code of Ethical Conduct) provide us with how we need to support, welcome, listen to, develop relationships with, respect, share knowledge with and help families as we work together in partnership with them to support their role as parents. The principles provide us with specific responsibilities to families in our role as early childhood professionals. These principles include what individuals must do as well as the programs that serve those families.

Pause to Reflect
After reviewing Section II – Ethical Responsibilities to Families in the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, what stands out to you and why? What seems to make the most sense and why? What might be easy for you to uphold? What may be challenging? How can you use the code to shape your interactions with families?

The Diversity of Today's Families

Figure 8.1 – This montage of photos shows a variety of families. [112]

The landscape of families has changed considerably over the last few decades. It is not that different types of families have never existed, but in today's society, we are making places at the table for this diversity. The families that we serve in our early learning centers reflect this.

Types of Families:

- Dual parent family
- Single Parent
- Grandparents or other relatives
- Teen parents
- Adoptive families
- Foster families
- Families with same sex parents
- Bi-racial/Multi-racial families
- Families with multi-religious/faith beliefs
- Children with an incarcerated parent(s)
- Unmarried parents who are raising children
- Transgender parents raising children
- Blended families
- Multigenerational Families
- Families formed through reproductive technology
- First time older parents
- Families who are homeless
- Families with children who have developmental delays and disabilities
- Families raising their children in a culture not their own

The list above is extensive; however, other family systems you will encounter in your work with children's families, are all worthy of respect and understanding. For a definition of the types of families listed above, refer to the Appendix.

Pause to Reflect
As an early childhood professional, why might it be important to understand each of these family structures?

Parenting Styles

In addition to the types of families we will work with, there will also be different parenting styles within those families. Diana Baumrind, looking at the demands parents place on their children and their responsiveness to their child's needs, placed parenting into the following categories:

1. Authoritarian Parenting Style: Authoritarian parenting is a strict style in which parents set rigid rules and high expectations for their children but do not allow them to make decisions for themselves. When rules are broken, punishments are swift and severe. It is often thought of as "my way or the highway" parenting.
2. Authoritative Parenting Style: Authoritative parents provide their children with boundaries and guidance, but give their children more freedom to make decisions and learn from their mistakes. It is referred to as a more democratic approach to parenting.
3. Permissive Parenting Style: Permissive parents give their children very few limits and have more of a peer relationship than a traditional parent-child dynamic. They are usually super-responsive to their kids' needs and give in to their children's wants. Today we use the term "helicopter or lawnmower parenting."
4. Neglectful Parenting Style: A style added later by researchers Eleanor Maccoby and John Martin, neglectful parents do not interact much with their children, placing no limits on their behavior but also failing to meet their needs. [113]

While this research suggested that children raised with authoritative parents have better outcomes, we must be careful not to rush to judgment when working with families. Our style of parenting is deeply rooted in how our parents raised us. As early childhood professionals, we have the opportunity to collaborate with families to join in working together for the betterment of their children, while considering culture, personality, and other circumstances.

Pause to Reflect
What parenting styles did your parents use with you? Do you see yourself using any of these styles as a teacher? Why or why not?

Stages of Parenting

Ellen Galinsky traced six distinct stages in the life of a parent in relation to their growing child. Much like how a child moves through stages. By looking at these different stages of parenting, those who work with children and youth can gain some insight into parental needs and concerns. [114]

Table 8.1: Stages of Parenting

	Age of Child	Main Tasks and Goals
Stage 1: The Image-Making Stage	Planning for a child; pregnancy	Consider what it means to be a parent and plan for changes to accommodate a child.
Stage 2: The Nurturing Stage	Infancy	Develop an attachment to child and adapt to the new baby.
Stage 3: The Authority Stage	Toddler and preschool	Parents create rules and figure out how to effectively guide their child's behavior.
Stage 4: The Interpretive Stage	Middle childhood	Parents help their children interpret their experiences with the social world beyond the family.
Stage 5: The Interdependence Stage	Adolescence	Parents renegotiate their relationship with adolescent children to allow for shared power in decision-making.
Stage 6: The Departure Stage	Early adulthood	Parents evaluate their successes and failures as parents.

Pause to Reflect
How does understanding these stages assist in your work with parents?

Valuing Families through Reflective Practice

Previous chapters have introduced reflection as a process we engage in to better ourselves, our practices, and by extension our programs. Working with families will bring an additional piece to our reflection as we continue to understand our values and beliefs and how they affect the way, we view different families. Are we feel more comfortable with some family structures over other family structures? Do we agree with certain family discipline techniques and not others? Do we connect with some families more than others?

These are all natural; after all, we all come from a family that has instilled certain beliefs and mindsets in us. Having these feelings is expected; acting upon them as an early childhood professional is different. All family members deserve respect and to feel valued. Just because they do something differently does not necessarily make it "wrong". We do not know what happens in a full day with that family any more than they know what happens in yours. We get a glimpse into the small portion they want to share with us, which may or may not be indicative of the rest of the picture. If we approach our families with a reflective lens, we can do much to understand and truly collaborate with them.

To begin this process, it is helpful to consider the following questions:

1. How can I learn more about that family?
2. What kinds of opportunities can I provide for families to be a part of their child's classroom experience?
3. How can I help all families feel connected, respected, and valued?
4. What judgments/assumptions do I have about different family structures? How do those judgments/assumptions get in the way of me connecting with all of my families?

Pause to Reflect
Which of these questions resonate with you? Are there others you might add?

Previous chapters have also repeatedly emphasized the importance of establishing relationships; providing a warm, safe, and trusting environment; and creating long-term connections with the children we work with. By extension, we can employ those same measures for each family member. A family is entrusting you with a very large and special portion of their life, often with very little knowledge of who you are. Finding ways to help them feel secure in their decision will go along way towards bridging the two most important worlds of a child's existence.

Pause to Reflect
What strategies that you have already considered using to make children feel comfortable and valued might you use with their families?

To serve families holistically, it requires a shift in our thinking. It is common for teachers to feel as if they are the experts, and that parents bring their children to us for our expertise. While this may be partially true, we need to understand that although we may be the experts in the way children develop and learn in general, parents are equal experts in their particular child. This acceptance of two complementary but different types of knowledge allows us to form true partnerships with families. It allows all parties to be better than they would on their own. How exciting it is, to learn from families all that they have to offer! How wonderful for a child to know that everyone is behind them, supporting them in the ways that they know best.

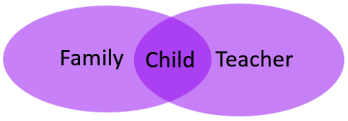


Figure 8.2 – The relationship between family and teacher centers on the child

Planning Partnerships

As we learned in Chapter 6 (Curriculum) and 7 (Environments), planning can be quite valuable for many aspects of our early childhood programs. Planning to include families will be no different. Usually, teachers consider the following to collaborate with families throughout the year:

- Setting the tone (making connections to help families feel included and comfortable)
- On-going communication (valuing this crucial process throughout the school year)
- Including families in the program (drawing on their expertise, experiences, and support)
- Home-School Connections (extending experiences between home and school)

FAMILY FRIENDLY STRATEGIES

SETTING THE TONE
Initial welcome letter for the year
Create conversation
Develop rapport with parents
Smile
Use warm humor
Create comfortable environment
Use music as appropriate
Hugs, warm wishes, have a good day, how was your day,…
Approach each parent every morning / daily greetings
Ask parents questions about their child
Coffee & donuts
Have sign in sheet inside classroom so they must come in
Parent volunteers in classroom
Invite parents to join in beginning or closing activity
Invite parents to explore the classroom
Set expectations / ground rules
Take parents on class field trips
Notice something new about parent / child
Respond promptly to concerns (letters, calls,…)
Have meetings in comfortable, intimate setting
Set time for parents to know they can meet with you
Family days
Ask for feedback about program
Parent info board
Picture board
Parent newsletter
Get to know parents as people
Get to know what parents do at work
Family pictures
VIP day / mother's day / father's day / grandparents day
Staff photos and summaries letting parents get to know staff
Ice cream social
Orientation and open house
Frequent parent conferences
Parent meet & greet night
Create a job info list where parents can contact other parents for services (realtor, plumber,…)

ON-GOING COMMUNICATION
Monthly / weekly newsletters
Handouts
Parents night
Suggestion box
Email announcements / current events
Journal of special observation for each child
Parent education classes / workshops
Share daily activities at pick up (verbal or send home)
Keep a stack of 3x5 cards handy and jot down info to share
Question & answer journal
Post curriculum
Post menu
Create a parent phone tree
Parent meetings with guest speakers
Documentations
Parent conferences

INCLUDING PARENTS IN PROGRAM
Include materials that represent home in school environment
Classroom volunteers
Share your career / hobby / interest
Attend field trips
Plan fundraisers
Pot luck
Assist with share day
Involve parents in lesson planning
Have a parents day lunch
Spectator at school events
Parents teach class in their area of expertise
Plan events
Tasks at home
Helping with projects
Reading with / to children
Donate materials
Help fix environment
Help with parties
Correct papers
Observe their children
Help with documentation
Bulletin boards
Outside play / volunteer
Cooking
Naptime
Help at meal time, setting up and/or providing
Joining children at meal time
Transitions
Washing hands
Events like open house, back to school night

HOME / SCHOOL CONNECTIONS
Activities started at school and then continued at home
Guest speaker nights with experts as presenters
Show and tell of the parent
Phone & email messages
Parent organizations
Potluck sharing favorite food
Have parents cook with the class
Inviting classmates to out of school activities
Game day at school for parents and kids
Make a family tree poster & display them
Create a family picture board
Children draw pictures of family & display
Class recipe book
Kareoke night
Pizza night
Suggest/bring materials that represent home for classroom
Tape record message to the class
Feeding / caring for pets
Suitcase – what do you do after school? Favorite game to play,…
Parents as guest speakers / readers
Ask parents for suggestions / ideas
Letters from parents sharing their own experiences

Eyrich, Sharon 2015

Figure 8.3 – Family Friendly Strategies [115]

Behavior as it Relates to Family

The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct states I-2.6 – To acknowledge families' childrearing values and their right to make decisions for their children. [116] There are many conflicting messages about how to raise children effectively today. When we listen to the concerns of families, we are better equipped to offer them educational experiences that can open their hearts and their minds to other ways of raising their children. (Refer to the list of parenting resources at the end of this chapter). It is important to be mindful that there are many ways to effectively parent. Noting that will help early childhood professionals to have respect for differences in all aspects of our field.

In addition, behavioral expectations vary from culture to culture. Behavior can be verbal, expressive, non-verbal, or non-expressive. Our role is to understand what the child is telling us by their behavior and to provide the necessary guidance that elevates the child and their family's sense of being.

Pause to Reflect
What behavior expectations did your family have for you as a child? How does that differ from other people in your life? What judgments do you hold about those behavioral expectations? How could those judgments affect the relationships you want to build with families?

Family Education

One of the important roles of early childhood professionals is to provide opportunities for families to gain more skills in the role of parents. We accomplish this by using various strategies that work for each of the families that we serve.

These strategies may include:

- Family workshops – we offer these workshops to families who may want to have more information about parenting. At the beginning of the school year, you can send a questionnaire home to inquire about what the families at your center may want to know more about in their role as parents. Facilitation of these workshops by center staff/administration, by other professionals who work closely with children and families, or professional family educators provide a diverse lens in which to support families in their quest for support and information.
- Meeting with families – families often parent in isolation and need support in their role as parents. The teacher can offer to meet with them to listen to their concerns and to share ideas with them. This is accomplished in the context of understanding, compassion, and respect for the role that families play.
- Support groups for families - You may want to consider providing opportunities for parents to provide support to each other. You can accomplish this by creating a space for parents to meet both formally and informally. This helps to engender agency in families and to create parent leaders.
- Newsletter s – provide families with parenting resources in a newsletter. You can write articles about specific parenting topics that the families at the center have identified. You can provide links to reputable parenting sites.
- Providing community resources to families – the Code of Ethical Conduct speaks directly to this. In I-2.9 it says: To foster families' efforts to build support networks and, when needed, participate in building networks for families by providing them opportunities to interact with program staff, other families, community resources, and professional services. P-2.15 states – We shall be familiar with and appropriately refer families to community resources and professional support services. After a referral has been made, we shall follow up and ensure that services have been appropriately provided. [117]
- Resource library – provide families with materials that they can check out. These resources could be parenting books, parenting articles, or parenting curriculum.

Pause to Reflect
These are just a few of the many ways we can provide families with education and support that can assist them in their parenting journey. In reviewing this section, what additional ideas do you have that excite you in educating parents?

Communicating with Families

According to NAEYC's - 5 Guidelines for Effective Teaching , the fifth guideline states "Establish reciprocal relationships with families." Effective communication begins with cultivating a trusting and mutually respectful relationship. As a best practice, teachers must strive to make family members feel like they are valued members of the team. Teachers must strive to encourage open lines of regular communication and should collaborate whenever possible, especially when it comes to making important decisions about their child. It is ultimately the teacher's responsibility to set the tone that lets families know a partnership is highly valued. In this section, we will review what effective communication entails, and we will look at how to prepare for family conferences. [118]

Sharing Perspectives

Effective communication is based on respect for others. When we have regard for other people's perspectives, we are able to show genuine respect and can cultivate a caring classroom community. Perspectives are personal viewpoints that allow us to make sense of the world we live in. We develop our attitudes, beliefs, and biases based upon our own knowledge, experiences, family history, cultural practices, and interactions we have throughout our lives. Both teachers and families make crucial decisions on how to guide and support children based on their own perspectives. Without realizing it, our perspectives can influence the way we interact and judge others. If we recognize our biases and try to understand that everyone is entitled to their own perspective, we can strive to develop respectful relationships with our families as we continue to support children's development. Let us look at valuable contributions both teachers and families bring to the relationship.

Pin It! What Teachers and Families Bring

Teachers bring

- information about the child based on observation and assessment
- information about the child's developmental performance
- information about the curriculum activities and learning goals for the child
- knowledge about the best practices, theory, and principles in early childhood
- Information about the program's philosophy, job description, agency policies
- their own unique personality and temperament
- their own training, experience, and professional philosophy

Families bring

- an understanding of the child's temperament, health history, and behaviors at home
- expectations, fears, and hopes about the child's success or failure
- culturally-rooted beliefs about child-rearing
- past experiences and beliefs about school
- parent/caregivers' sense of control and authority, and other personal and familial influences

Developing a Collaborative Partnership

Figure 8.4 – Family-centered care relies on respect and collaboration. [119]

As you engage in conversations, be aware that you communicate with your words, as well as your actions and body language. How can you create a warm and welcoming vibe that encourages open communication with families?

- A smile goes a long way . Make every attempt to greet each family at drop off time and be sure to say good-bye when they pick up their child.
- Family Questionnaires . It is important to realize that children come from diverse family settings and we should never assume to know the unique dynamics. In most cases, a child's home life is the child's first " classroom " and the parents are the child's first " teacher. " A questionnaire will provide useful insight and background information that you will need to approach the family more responsively.
- Offer anecdotes . Families appreciate hearing about special moments that occur in their child's day. Some parents may feel guilty or may struggle with missing out on those milestone moments. To help families feel connected, share those moments whenever possible.
- Have opportunities for families to volunteer . Include opportunities where families can get involved both in and out of the classroom setting.
- Have a system in place for on-going communication . Consider how you will share all that is happening at school and think about how families can inform you about what is happening at home. Some programs use handouts, emails, bulletin boards, and file folders to relay messages.
- Share your ECE knowledge . Keep in mind that childrearing practices are embedded in cultural practices. When we recognize that every family is doing their best that they can and wants the best for their children, we can provide support to families that matches their needs. Some families will need more support than others will. Provide parenting resources (handouts, books) and post information on community services (food pantries, free events, counseling) for your families.
- Maintain confidentiality and keep sensitive information private . Monitor what you say and write and NEVER share information about other families. Keep all documents, assessments, and important information stored in a safe place.
- Honesty is the best policy . Be direct and tell the truth (which is sometimes easier said than done). It is a good practice that if a parent asks you something and you do not have the answer- tell them you will have to get back to them. Guessing or giving inaccurate information can ultimately breakdown communication.
- Follow through. When you and a parent agree upon something (to talk at a certain time or to implement a new guidance strategy) be sure you do your part to keep up with the agreement. [120]

?	Pause to Reflect Do these make sense to you? Why or why not? What would you add?

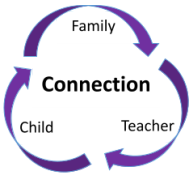


Figure 8.5 – Cycle of Connection

Effective Family Conferences

The purpose of conferences with families is for both teachers and families to share information about the child and to find ways to foster continued growth. To ensure that family members understand the purpose of the assessment process, you may want to create a handout that explains what family conferences look like at your center and what your goals are as the teacher. Be mindful that many families work and may find it difficult to engage in a traditional face-to-face conference. We recommend that you provide alternative ways to communicate with families to discuss their child's progress.

Here are some other tips and recommendations to consider when planning effective family conferences:

- Create a welcoming conference space. Set up a private space for the conference and arrange chairs side by side. Provide light snacks and beverages to help families feel more comfortable and relaxed during the conference.
- Be Prepared. Preparation is vital to conducting a successful conference. Take time to review the child's work and make notes of what you want to discuss during the conference. Prepare any handouts/resources you may want to give families at the meeting. Have the child's portfolio up to date and in pristine condition.
- Start the conference with a positive comment or question. Families are often anxious about what teachers will say about their child, so start the conference with a positive comment and let them know you appreciate them being there. Ask a question to open the dialogue (this will also let you know what is important to the family and what to focus on).
- Knowing the family's expectations will help guide your conference . Ask the family for input on their child's strengths and needs, behavior, and learning styles. Actively listening to the family will help you learn more about the child and his or her home life. This will help you better understand the hopes and goals the family has for their child.
- Remember that you are not a professional counselor, therapist, or social worker . Some families may want to tell you about their personal family matters, or about the challenging situations, they are facing. Keep social service resources on hand and have them readily available to give to your families.
- Stay focused . Conferences can easily get off-topic for one reason or another. The child's development is the purpose of the conference, so circle back around as needed to keep the conference on track.
- Ask open-ended questions. This will facilitate conversation and encourage families to engage and participate during the conference.
- Use family-friendly terms and avoid professional jargon. We want to make sure that families understand what we are telling them. We use professional jargon with our colleagues/co-workers. We may even consider colleagues as professional jargon. Remembering that families did not study child development will help us to use family-friendly terms in all of our communications with families.
- Have an inclusive support team on hand . Some families may not speak English and may need someone available to translate information.
- Engage families in the planning process . To further support their child's development, families will need practical activities to do at home. Discuss ways to tie in what efforts are being made at school with activities that can be done at home.
- Be reassuring . Families are not usually aware that there is a range of mastery when is pertains to developmental milestones.
- Be professional . You must always use professional verbal and written communication skills when dealing with families
- Be sensitive . When dealing with children who have special needs, put the person before the disability. Make sure family members are familiar with any important terms and that they understand questions or statements about their child's abilities. Have resources available.
- Focus on strengths and what the child can do . Families appreciate looking at their children from a strength-based lens. That perspective builds trust with families to enable them to hear everything that they need to know about their child in an early learning environment.
- Schedule a follow-up if needed . Schedule a follow-up meeting as needed if the family has concerns or to check in on the child's progress. This is also best practices with all families as a follow-up could be merely an informal check-in when dropping off or picking up.
- End the conference on a positive note . Thank all family members for coming to the conference. Stress collaboration and continued open communication. Let families know their support is needed and appreciated. Express confidence in the child's abilities to continue to learn and develop. Share at least one encouraging anecdote or positive comment about the child to end the conference.

[121]

Figure 8.6 – A family conference in action. [122]

In Closing

As early childhood professionals, we need to include families at the center of the work we do with their children. Valuing their input creates a sense of belonging that promotes success in school and home. Understanding the unique systems, styles, and stages of each of the family members we welcome into our program enables us to collaborate more fully with each of them, providing the type of collaborative expertise that enhances each partner beyond their individual capacity.

Quotable
"Children thrive when they have the skills they need to succeed and when families are meaningfully involved in their development and learning."
– Bierman, Morris, & Abenavoli [123]

References

Appendix

Child Development Permit Matrix

On the next page of this Appendix you will find the Child Development Permit Matrix as references in Chapter 3

Child Development Permit Matrix - *with Alternative Qualification Options Indicated*

Permit Title	Education and Experience Requirements (Option 1 only: Both column requirements must be met)		Alternative Qualification Requirements (Options 2, 3, or 4)	Authorization	Five Year Renewal Requirement
Assistant (Optional)	***Option 1:*** 6 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD)	***Option 1:*** None	***Option 2:*** Accredited HERO program (including ROP)	Authorizes the holder to assist in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program under the supervision of an Associate Teacher Permit holder or above.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****
Associate Teacher	***Option 1:*** 12 units ECE/CD including core courses**	***Option 1:*** 50 days of experience at 3+ hours per day within 2 years	***Option 2:*** Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. CDA Credential must be earned in California.	Authorizes the holder to provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and supervise an Aide or Assistant Permit holder.	Permit may only be renewed one time with additional 15 units. Must meet Teacher Permit requirements within 10 years.
Teacher	***Option 1:*** 24 units ECE/CD including core courses** plus 16 General Education (GE) units*	***Option 1:*** 175 days of experience at 3+ hours per day within 4 years	***Option 2:*** AA or higher in ECE/CD or related field with 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting	Authorizes the holder to provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and supervise Aide or Permit holders above.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****
Master Teacher	***Option 1:*** 24 units ECE/CD including core courses** plus 16 GE units* plus 6 specialization units plus 2 adult supervision units	***Option 1:*** 350 days of experience at 3+ hours per day within 4 years	***Option 2:*** BA or higher (does not have to be in ECE/CD) with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting	Authorizes the holder to provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and supervise all above including Aide. Also authorizes the holder to serve as a coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****
Site Supervisor	***Option 1:*** AA (or 60 units) which includes: • 24 ECE/CD units with core courses** plus 6 administration units plus 2 adult supervision units	***Option 1:*** 350 days of experience at 3+ hours per day within 4 years, including at least 100 days of supervising adults	***Option 2:*** BA or higher (does not have to be in ECE/CD) with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting; **Or *Option 3:*** Admin. credential *** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting; **Or *Option 4:*** Teaching credential**** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting	Authorizes the holder to supervise a child care and development program operating at a single site; provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****
Program Director	***Option 1:*** BA or higher (does not have to be in ECE/CD) including: • 24 ECE/CD units with core courses** plus 6 administration units plus 2 adult supervision units	***Option 1:*** Site Supervisor status and one program year of Site Supervisor experience	***Option 2:*** Admin. credential *** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting; **Or *Option 3:*** Teaching credential**** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting, plus 6 units administration; **Or *Option 4:*** Master's Degree in ECE/CD or Child/Human Development	Authorizes the holder to supervise a child care and development program operating in a single site or multiple-sites; provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****

NOTE: All unit requirements listed are semester units. All course work must be degree applicable and completed with a grade of 'C' or better from a regionally accredited college or university.

* GE Units: One course in each of the four general education categories: English/Language Arts; Math or Science; Social Sciences; Humanities and/or Fine Arts.
** Core Courses: One course in each of the following categories, Child/Human Growth & Development; Child/Family/Community or Child and Family Relations; and Programs/Curriculum. (All core course work must meet a minimum unit requirement of three semester units or four quarter units)
*** Holders of the Administrative Services Credential may serve as a Site Supervisor or Program Director.
**** A valid Multiple Subject or a Single Subject in Home Economics.
***** Professional growth hours must be completed under the guidance of a Professional Growth Advisor. Professional Growth Advisor Registry can be found at www.childdevelopment.org.

For more detailed information by the CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing, refer to Leaflet CL-797 at www.ctc.ca.gov.

This matrix was prepared by the Child Development Training Consortium. To obtain a permit application visit our website at www.childdevelopment.org.

Permit Matrix 12-2018

Descriptions of Families

Here are descriptions of the types of families listed in Chapter 8.

Dual parent family

We often thing about this as a mother and father raising children. However, in thinking about the the diversity of families this could include same sex parents as they are also raising children together.

Single parent family (either by choice or through divorce)

This could be a male or female parent who either wants to be a parent and does not have a partner to create a child with or is raising children on their own due to divorce. Often, we think of single parents as female, but today as we continue to form acceptance of family structures, they are males who are also choosing to form a family on their own or raise their children (from divorce) on their own.

Grandparents or other relatives raising children (relatives can also be non-related family members who are close to the children)

Children whose parents are not able to care for them (for whatever reason), may be raised by their maternal or paternal grandparents or may be raised by extended family members including those family members that are not related biologically.

Teen parents

Today it is more acceptable for teens who become pregnant to raise a child. Sometimes they may do this together or separate. Sometimes they may do this with the help of their families. Teens who become pregnant while still in high school are often able to return to school and there are programs on high school campuses where teens may bring their child. They may receive parenting classes in addition to their high school curriculum.

Adoptive families (including transracial adoption)

Families who are not able to conceive a child or carry a child to term may choose adoption as a way to form a family. While this tends to be most common, there are families who consciously choose adoption over procreation as well as decide to add to their family through adoption. In any case, forming a family through adoption is a choice not taken lightly. There are many options in forming your family through adoption. You can choose to have an open or closed adoption. Open adoption refers to having a continued relationship with the birth parent(s) to just knowing who the birthparents are and everything in between. Closed adoption means that the family does not have access to birthparent(s) information. In addition, families may choose to adopt a child of the same race or of another race.

Foster families

Children placed in temporary care due to extenuating circumstances involving their family of origin may be placed in homes that are licensed to care for children. The adults who foster these children must go through strict protocols in order to care for these vulnerable children. The most common name for this arrangement is fostering, but you may also hear them described as resource families. In these cases, it is the intent to reunite the children with their family of origin whenever possible. When this is not possible, the children are placed in the system for adoption. The foster family may

decide to adopt the children or adopted by another family. It is always the intent to find a permanent arrangement for children whenever possible, as we know that stability has better outcomes for children.

Families with Same-sex parents

Same sex couples, whether two men or two women, may choose to form a family and raise the children together. There are many options available when deciding to form their family. They may adopt, they may use reproductive technology, and they may use egg or sperm donors. In the case where two women are choosing to form a family, one of them may become pregnant and give birth to their child. According to recent research into children raised by same sex parents, there is evidence to suggest that since these children are planned, they often have better outcomes than originally was believed.

Bi-racial/Multi-racial families

These include families with children raised by parents from two different races, including parents who may be bi-racial themselves. This also includes multi-racial families. Society is becoming more acceptable of diversity within families, which provides children with better outcomes.

Families with multi-religious/faith beliefs

This includes families with children raised by parents who have different religious faith/beliefs. They may choose to raise their children with neither religion, either religion, or both.

Children with an incarcerated parent(s)

This includes families where one or both parents are incarcerated. This can be complicated for the family as the parent may spend some time away and then return home. While the parent who is incarcerated is away, the family structure changes. Each time the parent goes away and comes back adds to this confusion. Sometimes, children whose parent(s) are incarcerated may live in foster care while their parent is away and be returned to the parent upon their release, if it is safe for the child to do so.

Unmarried parents who are raising children

Today, many parents are deciding not to marry and raise children. The only difference is that they do not have a legal marriage license; however, their family structure is the same as dual parent families whether opposite sex or same sex.

Transgender parents raising children

This refers to two ways in which children may be raised by a transgender parent or parents. A parent may transition after already having children with someone of the opposite sex or they may transition prior to having a child and decide they want to parent.

Blended families

A blended family can be two different parents that come together each bringing their children from a previous relationship with them. Sometimes the parents that come together with children from a previous relationship may also decide to have a child together.

Multigenerational Families

These are families where multiple generations either live together in the same household or nearby. In America, this was a familiar practice during our agricultural boom. In other countries, this is an accepted practice, especially in Native cultures.

Families formed through reproductive technology

Today we have sophisticated medical advances to help parents who are infertile to become pregnant and give birth to their biological child as well as to use the biological material from someone else and carry that fertilized embryo to term. The variety of reproductive technology available to families is quite expansive. This is often at a huge financial cost to the families, as most medical insurance companies do not cover the medical expenses of infertility.

First time older parents

Today it is becoming more common for men and women to have children in their 30's, 40's, and even older.

Families who are homeless

We know that some children are raised without a stable home. The family may be living in their car, living in a hotel, a homeless shelter, or living in multiple dwellings also known as couch surfing. Families experiencing homelessness may be due to the loss of a job/steady income, being employed by making minimal wages that do not provide the means necessary to sustain housing (and other basic necessities), or other issues that may complicate the family's ability to sustain a stable place to live. Families do not always share their homeless status as there is often shame and embarrassment that society places on these families.

Families with children who have developmental delays and disabilities

This refers to families who have a child or children with developmental delays and/or disabilities. These delays/disabilities are varied. There also may be typically developing children in the family as well. This often places a burden on families, not only because of the time needed to care for a child who is not typically developing, but because society often misinterprets children who display behaviors that may be viewed as challenging.

Families raising their children in a culture not their own and in which English is not the primary language

This refers to families who may have immigrated here and whose children were either born in their country of origin or born in the United States. This duality of cultures can create challenges for the child and their family if societal expectations are that the family enculturate to the dominant culture. This results in children feeling shame about their family when they should feel pride in their family of origin.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

0: Introduction to Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children

We are so excited you have decided to join us on your journey into the wonderful world of young children!

If you are reading this, you're likely interested in learning more about becoming an early childhood professional. Perhaps you're just curious and want to know a little bit more about young children. Maybe you want to make up your mind after finding out a little bit more about what is involved. In either case, your interest and curiosity are two key characteristics that will make this a positive growth experience for you.

You probably had other options but made coming to this class a priority. You care about children. You have an audacity of kindness and passion for teaching. Adhering to these qualities is the launching pad for successful early childhood professionals.

0.1: Structure of this Book
0.5: College of the Canyon's Course of Study
0.1: Structure of this Book
0.2: Flow of the Book
0.3: Beginning your Journey
0.4: NAEYC Standards of Early Childhood Professional Preparation

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0.1: Structure of this Book

You will notice that each chapter begins with important information that pertains to the field of early childhood education as well as providing you with the learning objectives for each chapter. This will help you navigate the content with a deeper understanding.

1. Learning Objectives – Those objectives are identified in the course outline of record this book was based on (College of the Canyons). This is what we plan for in setting up the course content. There is an overall arching objective which is called the Course Student Learning Outcome or CSLO.
2. California Early Childhood Educator Competencies – This is a robust document created by a group of professionals to help to guide the field in creating early childhood professionals with the competencies that they need to become quality educators of young children.
3. National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation – These are national competencies, referred to as standards, that help to inform the field and to provide our department with the structure to ensure that when you finish our course of study, you will be prepared to work with young children and their families.
4. National Association for the Education of Young Children Code of Ethical Conduct – This code is our promise to provide children, families, our colleagues, and the community with the integrity needed to be professional early childhood educators.

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0.5: College of the Canyon's Course of Study

In looking over these 7 standards, we hope that you are able to make the connection to our course of study. ECE 100 - Principles and Practices of Early Childhood Education, the course you are currently enrolled in, is a survey course. It looks at the broad spectrum of the field. As you continue on your journey through our program, you will take courses that specifically address each standard. We hope that when you have completed the 24 units of Early Childhood Education, you will meet the competencies needed to begin your journey as an early childhood professional. Those courses are

- ECE 100 Principles and Practices of Early Childhood Education
- ECE 101 Child Growth and Development
- ECE 102 Child, Family, and Community
- ECE 103 Observation and Assessment
- ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education
- ECE 105 Health, Safety, and Nutrition in Early Childhood Education
- ECE 106 The Role of Equity and Diversity in Early Childhood Education
- ECE 200 Practicum – Field Experience

Of course, you can always continue on that journey enrolling in any of our other courses:

- ECE 130 Infant/Toddler Development and Curriculum
- ECE 135 School Age Child Care Programs and Curriculum
- ECE 140 Curriculum for School-Age Children
- ECE 144 Music and Movement for the Young Child
- ECE 151 Art and Creativity for Young Children
- ECE 155 Science and Math for the Young Child
- ECE 156 Literature and Language Development for the Young Child
- ECE 160 Understanding and Education of Children with Special Needs
- ECE 201 Supervision and Administration of Children's Programs
- ECE 202 Advanced Supervision and Administration of Children's Programs
- ECE 203 Adult Supervision and the Mentor Process in Early Childhood Education

or in other higher educational coursework learning more deeply, how to serve children and families with an intentional, supportive disposition.

Welcome to the field future colleagues, we wish you well!

College of the Canyons, Early Childhood Education Department

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0.2: Flow of the Book

The flow of the text is designed with chapters that build upon each other, so starting at the beginning and moving through in order may make the most sense. In addition to content, we include images, quotes, links (which we will update frequently but may change without our knowledge, so we apologize in advance if that is the case for you), and places to pause and reflect about what you have just read.

The chapters are as follows:

- **Chapter 1 History**: presents a little about the history of our field and encourages you to dig deeper as your interest dictates
- **Chapter 2 Theories**: introduces you to some of the major ideas and frameworks used to guide our practices with young children
- **Chapter 3 The Early Childhood Teaching Profession**: answers many initial questions students may ask about roles, responsibilities, and opportunities in the field of early childhood education
- **Chapter 4 Observation and Assessment**: Introduces you to the skills of gathering information about young children
- **Chapter 5 Developmental Ages and Stages**: builds on observational skills to understand the unique characteristics of children at various ages and stages of development
- **Chapter 6 Curriculum Basics**: builds even further on observational skills and an understanding of developmental ages and stages to provide appropriate interactions and learning experiences for young children
- **Chapter 7 Environments**: expands beyond curriculum to bring an awareness of the many aspects of planning physical spaces, routines and an interpersonal tone that meet the needs of young children
- **Chapter 8 Partnering with Families**: introduces the concept of valuing families as a child's first teacher and the importance of partnering to provide positive collaboration between a child's most important worlds, home and school.

Information moving forward to other ECE courses:

- The content in Chapter 1 (History), Chapter 2 (Developmental Theories), and Chapter 5 (Developmental Ages and Stages) will be touched upon in many of your other ECE courses.
- The content in Chapter 4 (Observation and Assessment), Chapter 6 (Curriculum Basics), Chapter 7 (Environments), and Chapter 8 (Partnering with Families) will each have their own course where you will study that particular topic in much more detail.

This class will prepare you to work in the field of early care and education as required by CA licensing (Title 22 and Title 5) and Accreditation.

The State of California, Department of Social Services houses a Community Care Licensing Division. A portion of Title 22 of these regulations stipulates requirements for early childhood programs, which includes educational requirements, of which this course applies.

The State of California Department of Education further regulates early childhood programs receiving any form of state funding through Title V (5). This course meets a portion of that academic requirement.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children offers Accreditation to those programs that apply and meet all qualifications of a quality program as defined by this organization. This course is included in the academic requirements.

The regulations above covered in Chapter 3 (The Early Childhood Teaching Profession) with the links included for you to investigate further. Knowledge of the regulations that govern our work with children and families is important as it provides the basis for our profession.

You will also find useful information about the ECE Department at College of the Canyons, as well as state and national content in Chapter 3. Our department website has many links in place to assist you in your endeavors. We encourage you to visit it often and take full advantage of the content that is there for you.

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0.3: Beginning your Journey

As a department, we believe strongly in supporting future educators, as a group and as individuals. As you begin your course work with us, we see you as just that. You are now beginning your college journey that will end with your successful completion of the coursework required to work with young children and their families. As such, we are here to hold you to high standards and to support you in meeting those standards. Working with children can be very rewarding as well as challenging.

In your work with young children and families, you will be expected to:

- work hard
- arrive on time
- come prepared
- participate fully
- continue to grow and learn
- be respectful to yourself, others and property
- maintain confidentiality
- behave in a professional and ethical manner at all times

What better place to practice these skills than in your ECE courses. We will expect that you will practice each of the skills mentioned above in every early childhood course you take so that they are perfected by the time you begin your career. This is also a time for you to

- Ask questions
- Try new things
- Step outside your comfort zone
- Join our campus organizations
- Get to know your current classmates who will be your future colleagues
- Get to know your professors, they are here to support you
- Have fun and enjoy the experience

What a wonderful balance! Learning new content as well as the professional skills needed to succeed in your future career!

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0.4: NAEYC Standards of Early Childhood Professional Preparation

As mentioned early, the beginning of each chapter includes a list of the professional standards that the chapter will be addressing. At College of the Canyons, we are in the process of applying for NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation. What that means, is that we need to use the standards to frame what we teach you and why. You can think of them as competencies that help to inform what early educators need to know to become professionals. They include.

- **Standard 1**: Having knowledge of how children grow and develop and using that to create respectful learning environments. (ECE 100, 101, & 104)
- **Standard 2**: Engaging with families to respect their diversity and involve them in their children's school life promotes more satisfactory school experiences for both the child and the family. (ECE 100 & 102)
- **Standard 3**: Using observation and assessment to guide what we do in the classroom is critical in supporting young children and their families. (ECE 100, 103 & 106)
- **Standard 4**: The use of positive relationships coupled with strategies that are geared toward the development of the child, allows us to connect with children and families. (ECE 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, & 200)
- **Standard 5**: Understanding how to build meaningful curriculum comes from your understanding of how children grow and develop, what is meaningful to them, and what is appropriate for them to explore. Increasing skills of inquiry, specifically, acknowledgment of children's curiosity, guides how we plan and implement our curriculum and environment. (ECE 100, 104, 105, & 106)
- **Standard 6**: Engaging in continuous learning, reflective practice, advocacy for children and their families, upholding ethical and professional standards is our professional responsibility. (ECE 200 and ECE 203 – which is not one of the 8 core courses you need for your ADT degree in ECE)
- **Standard 7**: Engaging in field experience enhances our connection with high quality programs that follow the previous standards, applying the knowledge learned in your course of study, affords you opportunities to develop your beliefs (philosophy) of how children grow and develop and your role as a future teacher. (ECE 103, 104, 105, 106, & 200)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: The History of Early Childhood Education

Learning Objective

- Examine historical and theoretical frameworks as they apply to current early childhood practices.

1.1: NAEYC Standards
1.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies
1.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)
1.4: Preview
1.5: History of Early Childhood Education
1.6: Philosophical Influences [1]
1.7: Educational Influences [2]
1.8: Interdisciplinary Influences [3]
1.9: Contemporary Influences [4]
1.10: In Closing

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1.1: NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation are addressed in this chapter:

Standard 1: Promoting child development and learning

Standard 2: Building family and community relationships

Standard 6: Becoming a professional

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1.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

The following competencies are addressed in this chapter:

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Professionalism
- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance
- Special Needs and Inclusion

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1.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: – I-1.1, I-1.2, I-1.5, I-1.8, I-1.9

Principles: P-1.1, P-1.2, P-1.7, P-1.11

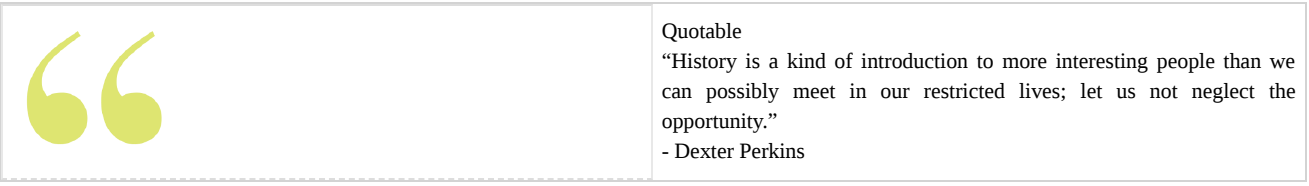
Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals: I-2.1, I-2.2, I-2.4, I-2.7, I-2.8, I-2.9

Principles: P-2.2, P-2.3

Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Ideals: I:4.1 (individual), I-4.6, I-4.7, I-4.8



Quotable
"History is a kind of introduction to more interesting people than we can possibly meet in our restricted lives; let us not neglect the opportunity."
- Dexter Perkins

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1.4: Preview

This chapter covers the historical underpinnings of the field of Early Childhood Education. You will discover the various influences that have been used as principles that have shaped current practices in early childhood settings.

As you begin your journey exploring the field that studies young children, you will come across several terms that are commonly used. While they are often used interchangeably, there are subtle differences which should be clarified at the start:

- Early Childhood: the stage of development from birth to age 8
- Child Development: the ways a child develops over time
- Early Childhood Education: the unique ways young children "learn" and the ways they are "taught". Part of the larger field of "education".
- Early Care and Education: A blend of the care young children need as well as the way they are "educated". Sometimes called "educare".

In this text we will use them interchangeably to mean the many ways children develop blended with their unique care and educational needs.

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1.5: History of Early Childhood Education

Childhood from a Historical Perspective

The field of Early Childhood Education has a rich history. As you will soon discover, history has not only provided us with a strong foundation, it has shaped our beliefs, instilled an appreciation for children, and it has provided us with a context that guides our current practices

It is hard to imagine but children were not always considered valued members of society. You might say, children were thought to be second class citizens. In the past, many believed that children should be seen and not heard, and that children should be ruled by might (e.g. “spare the rod spoil the child”). Often time’s children were punished harshly for behaviors that today we understand to be “typical” development.

In the past, childhood was not seen as a separate stage of development. There was not time for childhood curiosity and playful experiences. Children were thought of as little adults and they were expected to “earn their keep”. The expectation was that they would learn the family trade and carry on their family lineage.

Going to school was thought to be a privilege and only children of a certain class, race and status were given the opportunity to have a formal education. The primary curriculum for that era was based on biblical teachings and a typical school day consisted of lessons being taught by an adult in charge who wasn’t trained as a teacher.

A Time for Change

It’s important to note that historically, parents had no formal training on how to raise a healthy well-adjusted child. The only “parenting book” for that time was the Bible and even then, many were not able to read it. They parented based on what the church taught, and it was these strict morals and values that informed societal beliefs and guided child rearing. It wasn’t until the 1400-1600’s, during the Renaissance, that children were seen as pure and good. New ideals began to surface. Individuals that thought differently (outside the box) began to question and investigate treatment of children. They began to observe and notice there was more to children. These were the first advocates to try and enlighten society and change the adult viewpoint in an effort to improve outcomes and support children’s growth and development. Unfortunately, many were persecuted or ostracized for being outspoken and going against the society beliefs.

Let’s take a look at some of the historical contributors to early care and education.

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1.6: Philosophical Influences [1]

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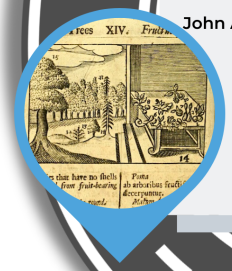
Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)

- Believed primary role of education is to teach children to read
- Family plays the most important role in educating children
- Contributed to idea that all children need to be educated (universal education)



John Amos Comenius – (1592 – 1670)

- Wrote the first picture book for children called "Orbis Pictus" – an alphabet book based on the study of nature and the senses
- Encouraged parents to let children play with other children of the same age
- Reflected the growing social reform that would educate the poor as well as the rich

John Locke – (1632 – 1714)

- Proposed idea called tabula rasa (clean slate)
- Believed that the child was born neutral rather than good or evil
- Suggested that instruction should be pleasant with play activities as well as drills

Jean Jacques Rousseau – (1712 – 1778)

- Wrote a book called "Emile" based on a hypothetical child – these ideas were brought forward in this book
  - Education should be more than vocational
  - Children construct their own knowledge
  - Children perspectives differ from adults
  - Children's cognitive development progresses through distinct stages and instruction should coincide with those stages

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi – (1746 – 1827)

- Believed that children should be cared for as well as educated
- Integrated curriculum that develops the whole child
  - Defined the whole child as the hand, the head, and the heart
- Thought children should be taught in group settings
- Encouraged parent education primarily for the mother

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1.7: Educational Influences [2]

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Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel – (1782 – 1852)

- Thought of as the father of kindergarten (which is taken from the German kinder garten – children's garden)
- Was designed for children ages 2 – 6
- Believed that play was essential for the child to develop self-regulation
- Instruction was through blocks, pets, and finger plays
- Designed the first educational toys which he called "gifts"
- The role of the adult was to facilitate learning experiences through delightful adventures providing ideas and materials for children to explore

Horace Mann (1796 – 1859)

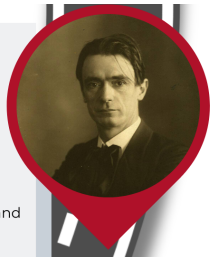
- Promoted universal and equitable education
- Believed in the value of training to enhance teacher quality
- Early education reformer

Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952)

- First female physician in Italy
- Work began with children who lived in the slums of Rome who were considered poor and mentally retarded
- Opened a preschool, Casa di Bambini, to provide motivation and an environment that supported their growth and development
- Designed materials that were self-correcting and aesthetically pleasing using natural materials to draw children's attention and develop self-help skills
- Saw that these children had potential, something that nobody else saw at that time.

Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925)

- Founded Waldorf approach to education
- Thought childhood was divided by three periods of development
  - The will (0 – 7)
  - The heart (7 – 14)
  - The head (14 years on)
- In the first period of development, "the will," the environment must be carefully planned to protect and nurture the child to enable children to explore
- Teachers were trained to understand this and to provide those experiences
- Focus on storytelling as a means of providing educational experiences

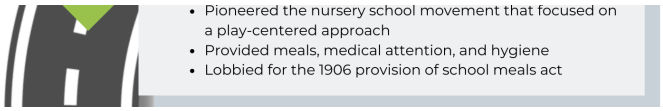


John Dewey (1858 – 1952)

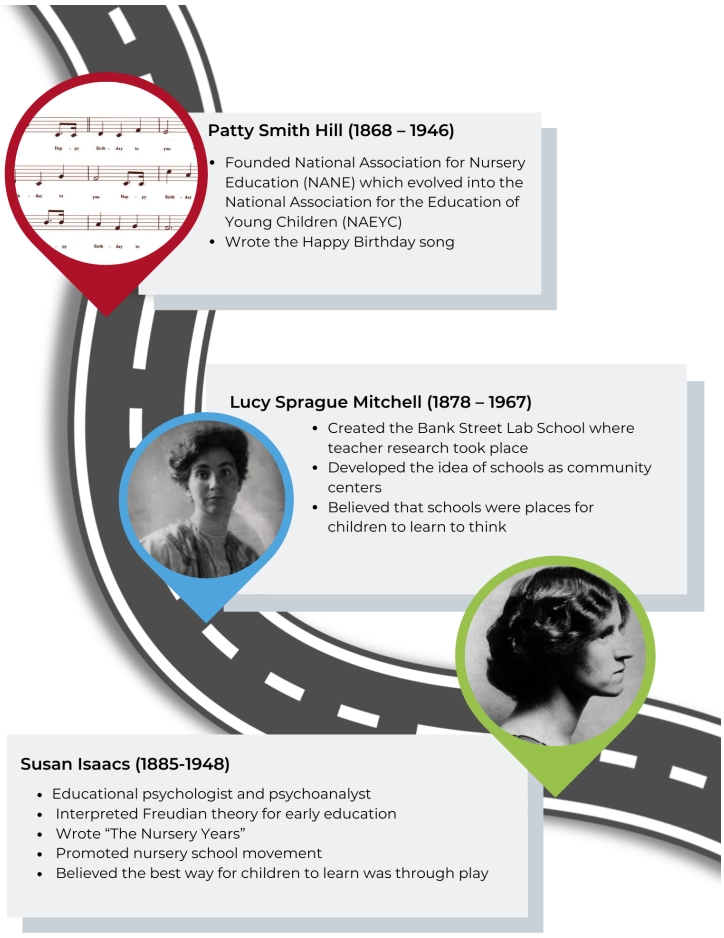
- Established a lab school
- Dewey's pedagogic creed includes the following ideology:
  - Groups provide opportunities for children to make and share friendships, solve problems and cooperate
  - Schools should be child-centered
  - The importance of supporting the child's home by enhancing it in the school

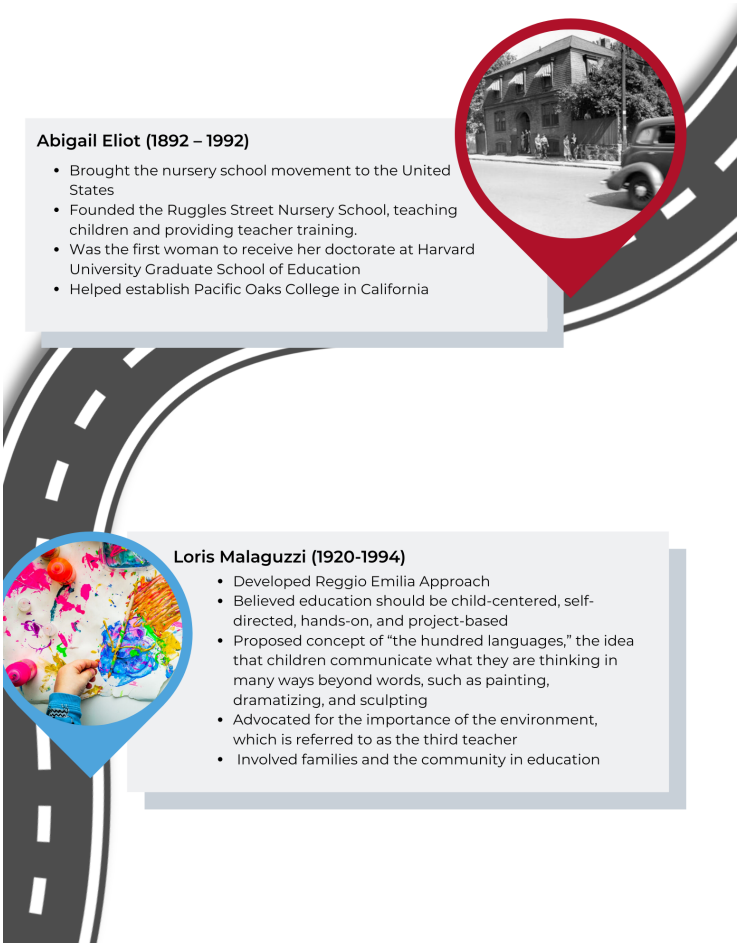
Rachel McMillan (1859 – 1917) & Margaret McMillan (1860 - 1931)

- Developed their school to address the filth that slum children lived within in London



- Pioneered the nursery school movement that focused on a play-centered approach
- Provided meals, medical attention, and hygiene
- Lobbied for the 1906 provision of school meals act


Patty Smith Hill (1868 – 1946)
• Founded National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) which evolved into the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
• Wrote the Happy Birthday song
Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1878 – 1967)
• Created the Bank Street Lab School where teacher research took place
• Developed the idea of schools as community centers
• Believed that schools were places for children to learn to think
Susan Isaacs (1885-1948)
• Educational psychologist and psychoanalyst
• Interpreted Freudian theory for early education
• Wrote "The Nursery Years"
• Promoted nursery school movement
• Believed the best way for children to learn was through play



The individuals mentioned in roadmap were noted philosophers and educators who sought to change the status quo. By advocating for the welfare and education of children they were instrumental in bringing an awareness that childhood is an important stage of life. It is critical to note that there were other influences from the field of psychology and medicine that also informed the field of early care and education.

The following interdisciplinary influences have contributed directly and indirectly to education, they run separate but parallel from the philosophers and educators on the roadmap, moving through time on their own track. As you consider these influences think about how their philosophies and theories intersected with education and child development.

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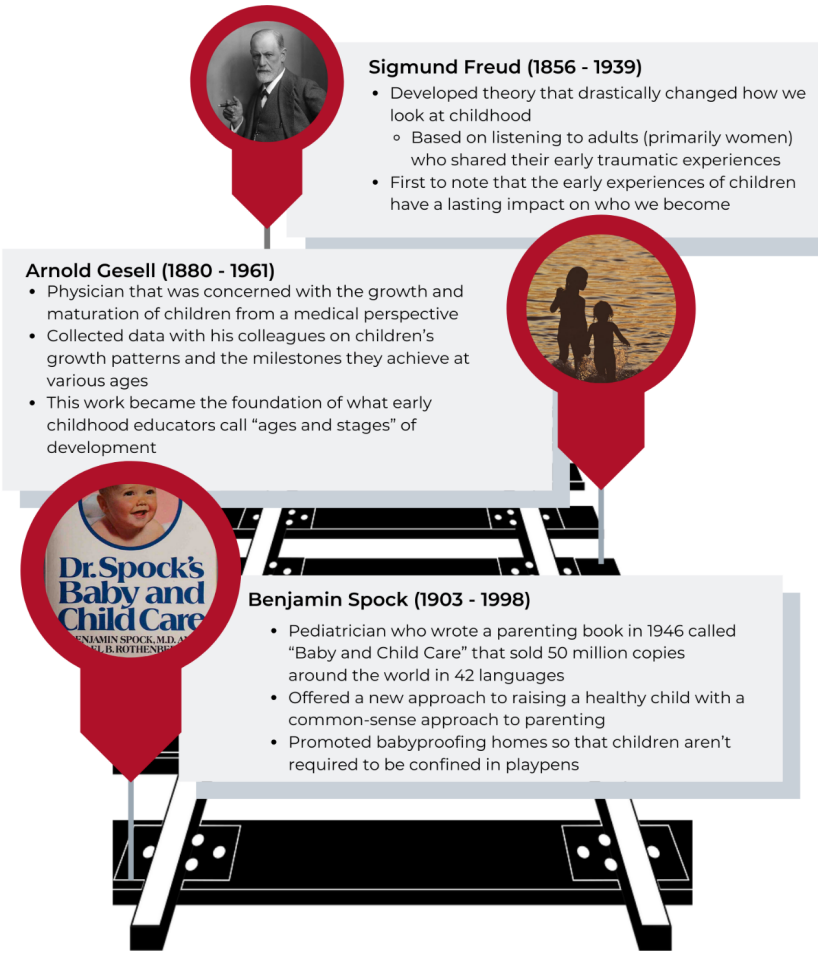
1.8: Interdisciplinary Influences [3]

Interdisciplinary refers to more than one branch of knowledge. In the case of Early Childhood Education, the disciplines include medicine, psychology, biology, parent educators and other early childhood professionals who have knowledge that helps to inform our practices with children and families. The collective knowledge we gain from these contributions, gives our field the evidence to support the role of the teacher in providing engaging environments, meaningful curriculum, guidance strategies, etc. This is often referred to as “best practices.” As you continue to engage with this textbook, this will become more apparent to you as it relates to the unique role of an early childhood professional.



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1.9: Contemporary Influences [4]

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T. Berry Brazelton (1918 – 2018)

- He was a pediatrician who not only published parenting books but had a television series entitled, "What Every Baby Knows"
- Primary focus was on the emotional and behavioral development of children
- Advocated for parental leave
- He developed an evaluation tool called the "Neonatal Behavior Assessment Scale" for newborns also known as the Brazelton

David Elkind

- Psychologist who advocated for allowing children time to investigate their environment
- Studied with Jean Piaget
- Published the book "The Hurried Child" in 1981 which addressed the implications of children being hurried to grow up.
- Calls attention to the need to afford children the opportunity to be children

Alfie Kohn

- Believes that children should be internally motivated rather than externally motivated
- Wrote a book entitled, "Punished by Rewards"
- Proposed that rewards provide only temporary compliance and in the long run children lose interest in what they had to do to get the reward

Dan Siegel

- Clinical professor at UCLA School of Medicine of Psychiatry
- Director of the Mindset Institute which offers seminars on mindfulness
- Defines mindfulness as the practice of inter- and intrapersonal attunement
- Focuses on family interactions and how attachment influences emotions and behavior

Dr. Bruce Perry

- Brain researcher who focuses on how the brain is impacted by early traumatic experiences.
- Wrote or co-wrote the following books:
  - "The Boy Who Was Raised as A Dog: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss"
  - "Born for Love: Why Empathy is Essential and Endangered

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1.10: In Closing

In Closing

This chapter has exposed you to some of the historical influences that have informed the field of early childhood education. In the next chapter, you will be given the opportunity to investigate theoretical ideologies that have been shaped by these influences. When we combine the historical content with theory, we have a stronger foundation for providing the care and support that children need as they grow and develop.

Pause to Reflect
How has history informed our current trends and practices in the field of early care and education? What stands out to you as your future or current role as an early childhood professional?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Developmental and Learning Theories

Learning Objectives

- Examine historical and theoretical frameworks as they apply to current early childhood practices.

2.1: NAEYC Standards
2.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies
2.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)
2.4: Preview
2.5: What is a Theory and Why is it Important?
2.6: Current Developmental Topics to Inform Our Practice with Children and Families
2.7: In Closing

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2.1: NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation are addressed in this chapter:

Standard 1: Promoting child development and learning

Standard 5: Using content knowledge to build meaningful curriculum

Standard 6: Becoming a professional

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2.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

Child Development and Learning

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Dual Language Development

Learning Environments and Curriculum
Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation

Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance

Special Needs and Inclusion

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2.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: – I-1.1 through I-1.11

Principles: P-1.1, P-1.2, P – 1.3, P-1.7

Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Ideals: I:4.1, I-4.6, I-4.8

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2.4: Preview

This chapter begins with the developmental and learning theories that guide our practices with young children who are in our care. The theories presented in this chapter help us to better understand the complexity of human development. The chapter concludes by looking at some of the current topics about children's development that inform and influence the field. With this valuable insight, we can acquire effective strategies to support the whole child – physically, cognitively, and affectively.

Quotable
"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults."
- F. Douglas

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2.5: What is a Theory and Why is it Important?

As with the historical perspectives that were discussed in Chapter 1, theories provide varied and in-depth perspectives that can be used to explain the complexity of human development.

Human development is divided into 3 main areas: Physical, Cognitive, and Affective. Together these address the development of the whole child.

Physical-motor development – this includes our gross motor, fine motor, and perceptual-motor. [5]

Cognitive or intellectual development – this includes our thoughts and how our brain processes information, as well as utilizes language so that we can communicate with one another. [6]

Affective development – this includes our emotions, social interactions, personality, creativity, spirituality, and the relationships we have with ourselves and others. [7]

All three areas of development are of critical importance in how we support the whole child. For example, if we are more concerned about a child's cognitive functioning we may neglect to give attention to their affective development. We know that when a child feels good about themselves and their capabilities, they are often able to take the required risks to learn about something new to them. Likewise, if a child is able to use their body to learn, that experience helps to elevate it to their brain.

	Quotable "If it isn't in the body, it can't be in the brain." - Bev Boss
	Quotable "Students who are loved at home come to school to learn, and students who aren't, come to school to be loved." - Nicholas A. Ferroni

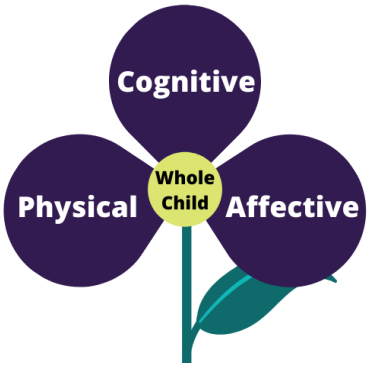

Figure 2.5.1: Whole Child Flower. [8]

Theories help us to understand behaviors and recognize developmental milestones so that we can organize our thoughts and consider how to best support a child's individual needs. With this information, we can then plan and implement learning experiences that are appropriate for the development of that child (called, "developmentally appropriate practice, which is discussed more later in this chapter), set up engaging environments, and most importantly, we can develop realistic expectations based on the child's age and stage of development.

A **theory** is defined as "a supposition, or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained, a set of principles on which the practice of an activity is based." [9]

The theories we chose to include in this text form the underlying "**principles**" that guide us in the decisions we make about the children in our care, as well as provide us with insight on how to best support children as they learn, grow, and develop. The

theories that have been selected were proposed by scientists and theorists who studied human development extensively. Each, with their own unique hypothesis, set out to examine and explain development by collecting data through observations/experiments. The theorists we selected, strived to answer pertinent questions about how we develop and become who we are. Some sought to explain why we do what we do, while others studied when we should achieve certain skills. Here are a few of the questions developmental theorists have considered:

- Is development due to maturation or due to experience? This is often described as the *nature versus nurture debate*. Theorists who side with nature propose that development stems from innate genetics or heredity. It is believed that as soon as we are conceived, we are wired with certain dispositions and characteristics that dictate our growth and development. Theorists who side with nurture claim that it is the physical and temporal experiences or environment that shape and influence our development. It is thought that our environment -our socio-economic status, the neighborhood we grow up in, and the schools we attend, along with our parents' values and religious upbringing impact our growth and development. Many experts feel it is no longer an "either nature OR nurture" debate but rather a matter of degree; which influences development more?
- Does one develop gradually or does one undergo specific changes during distinct time frames? This is considered the **continuous or discontinuous debate**. On one hand, some theorists propose that growth and development are **continuous**; it is a slow and **gradual** transition that occurs over time, much like an acorn growing into a giant oak tree. While on the other hand, there are theorists that consider growth and development to be **discontinuous**; which suggests that we become different organisms altogether as we transition from one stage of development to another, similar to a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

Pause to Reflect… Personal Growth and Development

Think about your own growth and development.

1. Do you favor one side of the nature vs nurture debate?
2. Which premise seems to make more sense – continuous or discontinuous development?

Take a moment to jot down some ideas. Your ideas help to create opportunities to deepen our understanding and to frame our important work with young children and their families.?

As suggested earlier, not only do theories help to explain key components of human development, theories also provide practitioners with valuable insight that can be utilized to support a child's learning, growth, and development. At this time, we would like to mention that although theories are based on notable scientific discoveries, it is necessary to emphasize the following:

- No one theory exclusively explains everything about a child's development.
- Theories are designed to help us make educated guesses about children's development
- Each theory focuses on a different aspect of human development
- Theories often build on previous theoretical concepts and may seek to expand ideals or explore new facets.

Let's take a look at the theories:

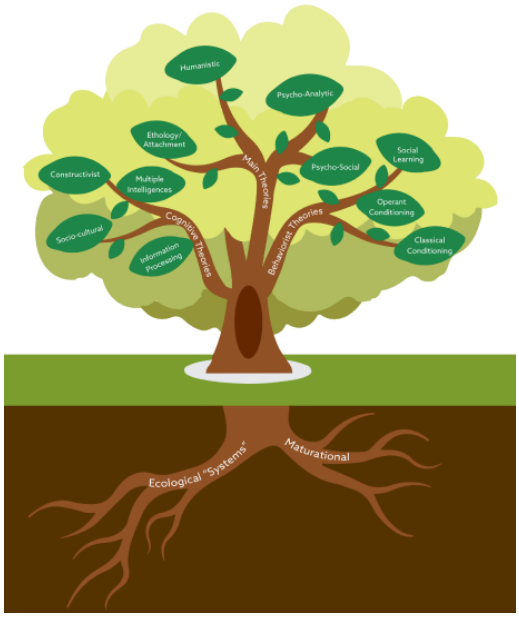

Figure 2.5.2: The Theory Tree. [10]

We are going to break it up as follows:

Table 2.5.1: Roots - Foundational Theories [11]

Theory	Key Points	Application
Maturational Arnold Gesell 1880 - 1961	• All children move through stages as they grow and mature • On average, most children of the same age are in the same stage • There are stages in all areas of development (physical, cognitive, language, affective) • You can't rush stages	• There are "typical" ages and stages • Understand current stage as well as what comes before and after • Give many experiences that meet the children at their current stage of development • When child is ready they move to the next stage
Ecological "Systems" Urie Bronfenbrenner 1917 – 2005	• There is broad outside influence on development • (Family, school, community, culture, friends ….) • There "environmental" influences impact development significantly	• Be aware of all systems that affect child • Learning environment have impact on the developing child • Home, school, community are important • Supporting families supports children

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Table 2.5.2: Branches – Topical Theories [12]

Theory	Key Points	Application
Psycho-Analytic Sigmund Freud 1856 – 1939	• Father of Psychology • Medical doctor trying to heal illness • We have an unconscious • Early experiences guide later behavior • Young children seek pleasure (id) • Ego is visible; when wounded can get defensive • Early stages of development are critical to healthy development	• Understand unconscious motivations • Create happy and healthy early experiences for later life behaviors • Know children are all about "ME" • Expect ego defenses • Keep small items out of toddlers reach • Treat toileting lightly

Psycho-Social Erik Erikson 1902 – 1994	• Relationships are crucial and form the social context of personality • Early experiences shape our later relationships and sense of self • Trust, autonomy, initiative – are the early stages of development • Humans like to feel competent and valued	• Provide basic trust (follow through on promises, provide stability and consistency, …) • Create a sense of "belongingness" • Support autonomy and exploration • Help children feel confident • Encourage trying things and taking safe risks • See mistakes as learning opportunities
Humanistic Abraham Maslow 1908-1970	• We have basic and growth needs • Basic needs must be met first • We move up the pyramid toward self-actualization	• Make sure basic needs like nutrition, sleep, safety is taken care of • Understand movement between needs • Know needs may be individual or as a group
Ethology/Attachment John Bowlby 1907-1990 Mary Ainsworth 1913 - 1999	• Biological basis for development • Serve evolutionary function for humankind • There are sensitive periods • Attachment is crucial for survival • Dominance hierarchies can serve survival function	• Understand evolutionary functions • Offer positive and appropriate opportunities doing sensitive periods • Facilitate healthy attachments

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Table 2.5.3: Branches – Cognitive Theories [13]

Theory	Key Points	Application
Constructivist Jean Piaget 1896 – 1980	• We construct knowledge from within • Active learning and exploration • Brains organize and adapt • Need time and repetition • Distinct stages (not mini-adults) • Sensory-motor, pre-operational	• Provide exploration and active learning • Ask open ended questions/promote thinking • Repeat often • Don't rush • Allow large blocks of time • Value each unique stage • Provide sensory and motor experiences • Provide problem solving experience
Socio-cultural Lev Vygotsky 1896 – 1934	• Learning occurs within a social context • Scaffolding – providing appropriate support to increase learning • "Zone of proximal development" = "readiness to learn" something	• Provide appropriate adult-child interactions • Encourage peer interactions • Provide a little help, then step back • Understand when a child is ready; don't push them or do it for them
Information Processing (Computational Theory) 1970 -	• Brain is like a computer • Input, process, store, retrieve • Early experiences create learning pathways • Cortisol – stress hormone shuts down thinking • Endorphins – "happy" hormone, increases learning	• Develop healthy brains (nutrition, sleep, exercise) • Decrease stress, increase happiness • Know sensory input (visual, auditory ….) • Understand individual differences • Allow time to process
Multiple Intelligences Howard Gardner 1943 -	• Once information enters the brain, each brain processes information differently	• Provide learning experiences to meet a wide range of learning styles • Help learners learn how they learn best • Offer many experiences in a variety of ways

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Table 2.5.4: Branches – Behaviorist Theories

Theory	Key Points	Application
Classical Conditioning Ivan Pavlov 1849 - 1936	• We respond automatically to some stimuli • When we pair a neutral stimulus with the one that elicits a response we can train the subject to respond to it • Over time we can “un-pair” stimulus and response	• Be aware of conditioning • Pair stimuli to elicit desired responses • Look for pairings in undesirable behaviors
Operant Conditioning B. F. Skinner 1904 – 1990	• Behavior is related to consequences • Reinforcement/Rewards/Punishment • Goals of behavior (motivators)	• Understand what is motivating behavior • Reinforce behavior we want • Don’t reinforce behavior we don’t want • Consider small increments
Social Learning Albert Bandura 1925 -	• Children (and adults) learn through observation • Children (and adults) model what they see	• Know what children are watching • Model what you want children to do

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2.6: Current Developmental Topics to Inform Our Practice with Children and Families

Brain Functioning

In the 21 st century, we have medical technology that has enabled us to discover more about how the brain functions. “Neuroscience research has developed sophisticated technologies, such as ultrasound; magnetic resonance imaging (MRI); positron emission tomography (PET); and effective, non-invasive ways to study brain chemistry (such as the steroid hormone cortisol).” [14] These technologies have made it possible to investigate what is happening in the brain, both how it is wired and how the chemicals in our brain affect our functioning. Here are some important aspects, from this research, for us to consider in working with children and families:

Rushton (2011) provides these four principles that help us to connect the dots to classroom practice:

Principle #1 : “Every brain is uniquely organized” When setting up our environments, it is important to use this lens so we can provide varied materials, activities, and interactions that are responsive to each individual child. (We expand on this in Chapter 5 – Developmental Ages and Stages/Guidance).

Principle #2 : “The brain is continually growing, changing, and adapting to the environment.”

- The brain operates on a “lose it or use it” principle. Why is this important? We know that we are born with about 100 billion brain cells and 50 trillion connections among them. We know that we need to use our brain to grow those cells and connections or they will wither away. Once they are gone, it is impossible to get them back.
- Children who are not properly nourished, both with nutrition and stimulation suffer from deterioration of brain cells and the connections needed to grow a healthy brain.
- Early experiences help to shape the brain. Attunement (which is a bringing into harmony,) with a child, creates that opportunity to make connections.

Principle #3 : “A brain-compatible classroom enables connection of learning to positive emotions.”

- Give children reasonable choices.
- Allow children to make decisions. (yellow shovel or blue shovel, jacket on or off, etc.)
- Allow children the full experience of the decisions they make. Mistakes are learning opportunities. (F.A.I.L. – First attempt in learning). Trying to do things multiple times and in multiple ways provides children with a healthy self-image.

Principle #4 : “Children’s brains need to be immersed in real life, hands-on, and meaningful learning experiences that are intertwined with a commonality and require some form of problem-solving.”

- Facilitate exploration in children’s individual and collective interests.
- Give children the respect to listen and engage regarding their findings.
- Give children time to explore.
- Give children the opportunity to make multiple hypotheses about what they are discovering.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), one of the professional organizations in the field of early childhood education, has a position statement from 2009 (note they are currently revising this position statement and are looking for feedback from the field, if you are interested in advocacy for young children, you may want to take the opportunity to review it and give feedback: https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/dap .) There are three important aspects of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP): [15]

1. What is known about child development and learning – referring to knowledge of age-related characteristics that permits general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children’s learning and development.
2. What is known about each child as an individual – referring to what practitioners learn about each child that has implications for how best to adapt and be responsive to that individual variation.
3. What is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live – referring to the values, expectations, and behavioral and linguistic conventions that shape children’s lives at home and in their communities that practitioners must strive to understand in order to ensure that learning experiences in the program or school are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family.

What does this mean?

Utilizing the core components of DAP is important as practitioners of early learning. Here are some things to consider:

- Knowledge about child development and learning helps up to make predictions about what children of a particular age group are like typically. This helps us to make decisions with some confidence about how we set up the environment, what learning materials we use in our classrooms, and what are the kinds of interactions and activities that will support the children in our class. In addition, this knowledge tells us that groups of children and the individual children within that group will be the same in some ways and different in other ways.
- To be an effective early childhood professional, we must use a variety of methods – such as observation, clinical interviews, examination of children's work, individual child assessments, and talking with families so we get to know each individual child in the group well. When we have compiled the information we need to support each child, we can make plans and adjustments to promote each child's individual development and learning as fully as possible.
- Each child grows up in a family and in a broader social and cultural community. This provides our understanding of what our group considers appropriate, values, expects, admires, etc. (think Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory and Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory). These understandings help us to absorb "rules" about behaviors – how do I show respect in my culture, how do I interact with people I know well and I have just met (as a teacher you will be in the just met category for a while), how do I regard time and personal space, how should I dress, etc. When young children are in a group setting outside their home, what makes the most sense to them, how they use language to interact, and how they experience this new world depend on the social and cultural contexts to which they are accustomed. Skilled teachers consider such contextual factors along with the children's ages and their individual differences, in shaping all aspects of the learning environments. (More content will be in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 that will help you to deeply understand DAP)

To summarize how to make use of DAP, an effective teacher begins by thinking about what children of that chronological and developmental age are like. This knowledge provides a general idea of the activities, routines, interactions, and curriculum that will be effective with that group of children. The teacher must also consider how each child is an individual within the context of family, community, culture, linguistic norms, social group, past experience, and current circumstances. Once the teacher can fully see children as they are, they are able to make decisions that are developmentally and culturally appropriate for each of the children in their care.

Identity Formation

Who we are is a very important aspect of our well-being. As children grow and develop, their identity is shaped by who they are when they arrive on this planet and the adults and peers whom they interact with throughout their lifespan. Many theories give us supportive evidence that helps us to see that our self-concept is critical to the social and emotional health of human beings. (ex. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, John Bowlby's Attachment Theory, etc.) As early childhood professionals, we are called upon to positively support the social/emotional development of the children and the families that we serve. We do this by:

- Honoring each unique child and the family they are a part of.
- Acknowledging their emotions with attunement and support.
- Listening to hear not to respond.
- Providing an emotionally safe space in our early childhood environments.
- Recognizing that all emotions are important and allowing children the freedom to express their emotions while providing them the necessary containment of safety.

Our social-emotional life or our self-concept has many aspects to it. We are complex beings and we have several identities that early childhood professionals need to be aware of when interacting with the children and families in their early childhood environments. Our identities include but are not limited to the following categories:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Economic Class
- Sexual Identity
- Religion
- Language

- (Dis)abilities
- Age

Understanding our own identities and that we are all unique, helps us to build meaningful relationships with children and families that enable us to have understanding and compassion. Being aware (using reflective practice) that all humans are diverse and our environments, both emotionally and physically, need to affirm all who come to our environments to learn and grow.

While we begin to form our identities from the moment we are conceived, identity formation is not stagnant. It is a dynamic process that develops throughout the life span. Hence, it is our ethical responsibility as early childhood professionals to create supportive language, environments, and inclusive practices that will affirm all who are a part of our early learning programs.

While we delve more into guiding the behavior of young children in Chapter 5, there is evidence that when children feel supported and accepted by adults for who they are, this helps to wire and equip the brain for self-regulation. As we model regulation behavior (this is often identified as co-regulation behavior) which includes acceptance, compassion, belonging, and empathy, we are helping children to develop the regulation skills needed to get along and live in a diverse society.

Pause to Reflect… Gender Stereotypes

In American society, we have established and readily accept gender stereotypes. We have many biases about how boys and girls should look and behave. If you have grown up in America, you may be familiar with some of the following gender stereotypes:

- Only girls cry.
- Boys are stronger than girls.
- Boys are active and girls are passive.
- It's ok for boys to be physically and emotionally aggressive after all they are just being boys.

What other gender stereotypes have you heard?

These stereotypes are so ingrained in us that we are often unconscious of how we perpetuate them. For example, we may compliment girls on their clothing and boys on their strength. We are called to look at our stereotypes/biases and find ways to counteract them when we are faced with the variety of ways in which boys and girls behave in our early childhood classrooms. How can we do that? We do that by engaging in dialogue with others to challenge our stereotypes and change our practices to create more inclusive and supportive environments.

Note- This is an example of only one of the identity categories that is mentioned above. Think about what other stereotypes you have about the other categories of identity listed above. What can you do to challenge your assumptions/biases to help you in becoming an early childhood professional who engages in inclusive and supportive practices?

Attachment

"*Attachment is the tendency of human infants and animals to become emotionally close to certain individuals and to be calm and soothed while in their presence. Human infants develop strong emotional bonds with a caregiver, particularly a parent, and attachment to their caregivers is a step toward establishing a feeling of security in the world. When fearful or anxious the infant is comforted by contact with their object. For humans, attachment also involves and affects the tendency in adulthood to seek emotionally supportive relationships.*" [16]

As noted in Attachment Theory, co-created by Bowlby and Ainsworth, it is clear to us that attachment is a critical component of healthy development. Our brains are wired for attachment. Many of you may have witnessed a newborn baby as they interact with their parents/caregivers. Their very survival hinges on the attachment bonds that develop as they grow and develop. Children who are not given the proper support for attachment to occur may develop reactive attachment disorder. Reactive attachment disorder is a rare but serious condition in which an infant or young child does not establish healthy attachments with parents or caregivers. Reactive attachment disorder may develop if the child's basic needs for comfort, affection, and nurturing are not met and loving, caring, stable attachments with others are not established. [17]

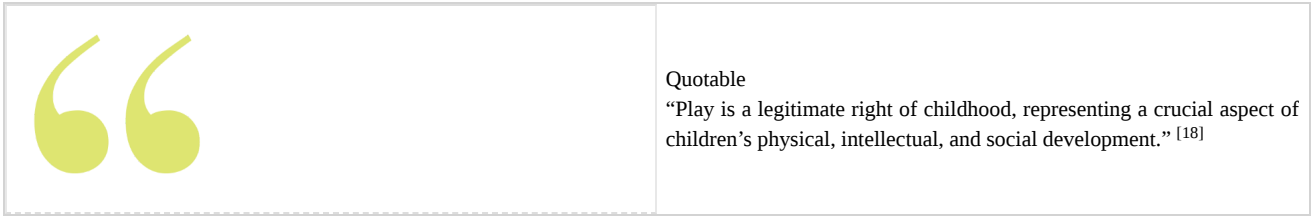
Why is this important for early childhood practitioners to know? The role of an early childhood professional is one of caregiving. While you are not the parent, nor a substitute for the parent, you do provide care for children in the absence of their parent. Families bring their children to early childhood centers for a whole host of reasons, but one thing that they share is that they trust their child's caregivers to meet the need of their child is a loving and supportive way.

Healthy attachments begin with a bond with the child's primary caregivers (usually their family) and then extend to others who provide care for their child. How we as early childhood professionals care and support children, either adds or detracts from their healthy attachment. Our primary role is to ensure that the needs of children are met with love and support.

It is also possible that children may enter our early childhood environment with unhealthy attachment or could possibly have reactive attachment disorder. In this case, it is our ethical and moral responsibility to meet with the family (in Chapter 8 – Partnering with Families more context and content will be given to support this statement) and to provide them with resources and support that could they could use to help their children to have better outcomes. As the course of study of an early childhood professional, affords them with knowledge and understanding of how children grow and develop, families do not often have this foundational knowledge. It is our duty to develop a reciprocal relationship with families that is respectful and compassionate. When we offer them support, we do so without judgment.

The Value of Play in Childhood

There has been much research done in recent years about the importance of play for young children. During the last 20 years, we have seen a decline in valuable play practices for children from birth to age 8. This decline has been shown to be detrimental to the healthy development of young children as play is the vehicle in which they learn about and discover the world.



Quotable
"Play is a legitimate right of childhood, representing a crucial aspect of children's physical, intellectual, and social development." [18]

The true sense of play is that it is spontaneous, rewarding and fun. It has numerous benefits for young children as well as throughout the lifespan.

- It helps children build foundational skills for learning to read, write and do math.
- It helps children learn to navigate their social world. How to socialize with peers, how to understand others, how to communicate and negotiate with others, and how to identify who they are and what they like.
- It encourages children to learn, to imagine, to categorize, to be curious, to solve problems, and to love learning.
- It gives children opportunities to express what is troubling them about their daily life, including the stresses that exist within their home and other stresses that arise for them outside of the home.

If you remember from the history chapter (Chapter 1), Fredrich Froebel introduced the concept of Kindergarten which literally means "child's garden." If you recall, the focus of the kindergarten that Froebel envisioned, focused on the whole child rather than specific subjects. The primary idea is that children should first develop social, emotional, motor, and cognitive skills in order to transform that learning to be ready for the demands on primary school (Chapter 6 – Early Childhood Programming will provide more detail about this). Play is the primary way in which children learn and grow in the early years.

A teacher who understands the importance and value of play organizes the early childhood environment with meaningful activities and learning opportunities (aka Curriculum) to support the children in their classroom. This means that the collective and individuality of the children are taken into consideration as well as their social and cultural contexts (DAP).

Here are some things to consider in thinking about play:

- Play is relatively free of rules and is child-directed.
- Play is carried out as if it is real life. (As it is real life for the child)
- Play focusing on being rather than doing or the end result. (It is a process, not a product)
- Play requires the interaction and involvement of the children and the support, either direct or indirect, of the early childhood professional.

Throughout the early years of development (0 -8), young children engage in many different forms of play. Those forms of play include but are not limited to: [19]

- **Symbolic Play** – play which provides children with opportunities to make sense of the things that they see (for example, using a piece of wood to symbolize a person or an object)
- **Rough and Tumble Play** – this is more about contact and less about fighting, it is about touching, tickling, gauging relative strength, discovering flexibility and the exhilaration of display, it releases energy and it allows children to participate in physical contact without resulting in someone getting hurt
- **Socio-Dramatic Play** – playing house, going to the store, being a mother, father, etc., it is the enactment of the roles in which they see around them and their interpretation of those roles, it's an opportunity for adults to witness how children internalize their experiences
- **Social Play** – this is play in which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored, and amended
- **Creative Play** – play which allows new responses, transformation of information awareness of new connections with an element of surprise, allows children to use and try out their imagination
- **Communication Play** – using words, gestures, charades, jokes, play-acting, singing, whispering, exploring the various ways in which we communicate as humans
- **Locomotor Play** – movement in any or every direction (for example, chase, tag, hide and seek, tree climbing)
- **Deep Play** – it allows children to encounter risky or even potentially life-threatening experiences, to develop survival skills, and conquer fear (for example, balancing on a high beam, roller skating, high jump, riding a bike)
- **Fantasy Play** – the type of play allows the child to let their imagination run wild, to arrange the world in the child's way, a way that is unlikely to occur (for example, play at being a pilot and flying around the world), pretending to be various characters/people, be wherever and whatever they want to be and do
- **Object Play** – use of hand-eye manipulations and movements

Communicating with families about the power and importance of play is necessary but can be tricky. In an article entitled, "10 Things Every Parent Should Know About Play" by Laurel Bongiorno published by NAEYC (found on naeyc.org), this is what she states: [20]

1. Children learn through play
2. Play is healthy
3. Play reduces stress
4. Play is more than meets the eye
5. Make time for play
6. Play and learning go hand-in-hand
7. Play outside
8. There's a lot to learn about play
9. Trust your own playful instincts
10. Play is a child's context for learning

As you continue your studies in early childhood education, you will begin to form and inform your own ideas about the value of play as you review the literature and research that has been compiled on this subject.

Trauma Informed Care [21]

Over the last few decades, we have seen an increase in childhood trauma. Many types of trauma have a lasting effect on children as they grow and develop. When we think of trauma, we may think of things that are severe; however, we know that trauma comes in small doses that are repeated over time.

There has been much research done to help identify what these adverse childhood experiences are. The compilation of research has identified some traumatic events that occur in childhood (0 – 17 years) that have an impact on children's well-being that can last into adulthood if not given the proper support to help to mitigate this trauma. Here is a list of some of the traumatic events that may impact children's mental and physical well-being: [22]

- Experiencing violence or abuse
- Witnessing violence in the home or community
- Having a family member attempt or die by suicide

Also including are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as growing up in a household with:

- Substance misuse
- Mental health problems
- Emotional abuse or neglect
- Instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison

Pause to Reflect… COVID-19 Trauma
How may COVID-10, with the disruptions, isolations, and uncertainty contribute to trauma in early childhood?

These adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness and substance abuse in adulthood, and a negative impact on educational and job opportunities.

Here are some astounding facts about ACEs:

- **ACE's are common**. About 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACE, and nearly 1 in 6 reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs.
- **Preventing ACEs could potentially reduce a large number of health conditions**. For example, up to 1.9 million cases of heart disease and 21 million cases of depression could have been potentially avoided by preventing ACEs.
- **Some children are at greater risk than others**. Women and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for having experienced 4 or more types of ACEs.
- **ACEs are costly**. The economic and social costs to families, communities, and society total hundreds of billions of dollars each year.

Trauma Informed Care is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. Trauma Informed Care also emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both consumers and providers, and helps survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

What can we do in our early childhood programs? We can help to ensure a strong start for children by:

- Creating an early learning program that supports family engagement.
- Make sure we are providing a high-quality child care experience.
- Support the social-emotional development of all children.
- Provide parenting workshops that help to promote the skills of parents.
- Use home visitation as a way to engage and support children and their families.
- Reflect on our own practices that could be unintentionally harmful to children who have experienced trauma.

What can we do in our community? As early childhood professionals, our ethical responsibilities extend to our community as well (NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, May, 2011):

- Be a part of changing how people think about the causes of ACEs and who could help prevent them.
- Shift the focus from individual responsibility to community solutions.
- Reduce stigma around seeking help with parenting challenges or for substance misuse, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
- Promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play

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2.7: In Closing

This chapter explored the developmental and learning theories that guide our practices with young children. This included a look at some of the classic theories that have stood the test of time, as well as, the current developmental topics to give us opportunities to think about what we can do to create the most supportive learning environment for children and their families. Learning is a complex process that involves the whole child – physically, cognitively, and affectively.

As we build upon the previous knowledge of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, Chapter 3 will provide information on the importance of observation and assessment of children in early learning environments. Hopefully, you will note that, while this course looks at the foundational knowledge and skills you need to be an effective early childhood professional, what you are learning is deeply interwoven and connected.

Pause to Reflect… Theory Takeaway

What was the most important information that you learned from this chapter on theory and key developmental topics? Why was it most important to you and how do you plan to incorporate that information in your practices with young children and their families? When we think about what we are learning metacognitively (thinking about thinking), it helps us to make sense of that knowledge and reflect on how it pertains to us. This is a practice that will suit you well in your journey as an early childhood professional.

References

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: The Early Childhood Teaching Profession

Learning Objectives

- Examine effective relationships and interactions between early childhood professionals, children, families, and colleagues, including the importance of collaboration.
- Identify professional pathways in early childhood education, including career options and professional preparation.

3.1: NAEYC Standards
3.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies
3.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)
3.4: Preview
3.5: Why?
3.6: Who?
3.7: What?
3.8: When?
3.9: Where?
3.10: How?
3.11: In Closing

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3.1: NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

1. Promoting Child Development and Learning
2. Building Family and Community Relationships
3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
4. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families
5. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum
6. Becoming a professional

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3.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

Child Development and Learning

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Family and Community Engagement

Learning Environments and Curriculum

Professionalism

Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance

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3.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

- Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children
  - Ideals: 1.1 – 1.12
  - Principles 1.1 – 1.11
- Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families
  - Ideals: 2.1 – 2.9
  - Principles: 2.1 – 2.15
- Section III: Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues (it is broken into two specific responsibilities)
  - A – Responsibilities to coworkers
    - Ideals: 3A.1 – 3A.4
    - Principles: 3A.1 – 3A.4
  - B – Responsibilities to employers
    - Ideals: 3B.1 – I – 3B.2
    - Principles: 3B.1 – P – 3B.5
- Section IV: Ethical Responsibility to Community and Society (we have both an individual and a collective responsibility)
  - Ideals: 4.1 – 4.8
  - Principles: 4.1 – 4.13

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3.4: Preview

Pause to Reflect
What questions do you have about working with young children?

In this chapter, we will cover information about the “nuts and bolts” of working with young children that may answer some of your initial questions (and maybe spark more). In the first draft of this chapter, we invited a new teacher to write with us. What better way to get to know your roles and responsibilities than from someone who is just beginning their own journey? For this edition, we have incorporated portions of her work in this chapter, along with thoughts from other new teachers, and since the questions you reflected upon in the opening exercise probably began with one of the words in the diagram below, we will take that approach to the chapter.

Figure 3.4.1: Questions to explore as you learn about the profession.

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3.5: Why?

Simon Sinek encourages us to start with “why”. His Ted Talk (Start with Why)[23] highlights the importance of beginning with this understanding, to help everything else fall into place. So let us start there.

Pause to Reflect
WHY do you want to work with young children?

The way that you answered will have much to do with how you move forward. It will help you define your core beliefs about working with young children, the type of program you will feel comfortable in; how you will approach your career and the tasks you will prefer doing. Revisit your “why” often and use it wisely to guide you.

New Teacher Comment
“The first time I watched Simon Sinek I was blown away!
Whenever I am not sure how to proceed, I go back to my “why.”
When I went on job interviews, some places “felt” like a better place than others to work, a better “fit”. I realized that was my “why” guiding me.
I use “why” as a starting place for guiding behavior. I begin by listing all of the reasons a child might behave a certain way and plan from there.”

While you will have an individual “why”, the field of early childhood education also has a collective “why” that guides our work. Almost every profession has an organizing body that unifies its members’ voices. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), established in 1926 and always evolving, is the premier professional organization for those working with young children and families. We encourage you to visit their website naeyc.org to view the many resources available to you, including articles, books, research, conferences, and position statements. Because there are so many individual “whys”, rather than telling professionals specifically what to do in every situation, NAEYC has compiled two statements that broadly define our unified early childhood “why”.

The first is a Code of Ethical Conduct, which lays the foundation for “why” we behave as we do are provided in the NAEYC Statement of Commitment:

As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to further the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of my ability, I will:

- Never harm children.
- Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education.
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- Respect colleagues in early childhood care and education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
- Stay informed of and maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- Engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases, and beliefs have an impact on children and families.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.
- Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. [24]

New Teacher Comment

"I was amazed at how much I use the ethical guidelines. At least once a week I run into an issue with a child, parent, or co-worker that is not a straightforward right and wrong. This code helps me put things into perspective and handle them in a professional manner, especially as a new teacher.

When a coworker approached me with juicy gossip about another coworker, I quickly informed her that if that coworker wanted me to know she would tell me herself, no need to talk behind her back. Straight from the Code of Conduct! Boom!

I find these 2 documents blends nicely. When I am faced with planning curriculum, I can look at what is developmentally appropriate and then justify it further by considering it ethically.

Our teaching team has found that planning by using Developmentally Appropriate Practices makes for a happy, healthy classroom of children well prepared to embrace life and learning.

I whole-heartedly agree that what teachers do is the single most important factor in the classroom!"

The second set of guiding principles compiled through years of research on how young children develop and learn, lay a foundation for the general practices we use when planning, implementing, and reflecting up interactions and experiences in our programs. Again, rather than a step-by-step guide on exactly what to do in every situation, these "Developmentally Appropriate Practices" highlight the "whys" that guide what we do with young children. The content presented in this textbook is based on these principles, which include:

Practices that:

- Are appropriate to children's age and developmental stages, attuned to them as unique individuals, and responsive to the social and cultural contexts in which they live.
- Include comprehensive, effective curriculum incorporating knowledge that all domains of development interrelate.
- Embed what is known about the interrelationships and sequences of ideas, so that children's later abilities and understandings can be built on those already acquired.
- Know that both child-guided and teacher-guided experiences are vital to children's development and learning.
- Understand that rather than diminishing children's learning by reducing the time devoted to academic activities, play promotes key abilities that enable children to learn successfully.
- Hold critical that a teacher's moment-by-moment actions and interactions with children are the most powerful determinant of learning outcomes and development. Curriculum is very important, but what the teacher does is paramount.
- Ensure that for teachers are able to provide care and education of high quality, they must be well prepared, participate in ongoing professional development, and receive sufficient support and compensation.
- Realize that children are part of families and communities and that partnerships between home and school are crucial. [25]

Pause to Reflect

How does your personal WHY fit into this collective WHY?

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3.6: Who?

Who are the children?

The children you will work with are as diverse as the people that work with them. Many programs are divided by age groups, so that is one way to define "who":

- Infants – from birth to about 12 months (1 year) of age
- Toddlers – from about 12 months (1 year) to 30 months (2 ½ years) of age
- Preschool – from about 2 ½ to about 5 years of age
- Pre - Kindergarten or T-Kindergarten – usually 4-5 year of age
- Kindergarten – 5 years of age
- Early Elementary (Grades 1-3) – 6-8 years of age

As you will learn in Chapter 5 (Developmental Ages and Stages), each of these ages presents very different developmental stages and teachers work with each group accordingly. Some programs focus on just one of these age groups while others may incorporate several or all of them.

Figure 3.6.1: These preschool-aged children all need to feel respected, valued, and loved. [26]

The children you work with can be defined in many others way, some of which you will visit in this class, as well as other early childhood courses. Each child is unique and will come to you with their own experiences, strengths, and temperaments. Some you will connect with right away, and others you will need to stretch yourself to understand. The one thing that EVERY child you work with will have in common is the need to be respected, valued and loved. They need a safe place to trust and make connections, to feel comfortable and included. One of your primary jobs as a teacher is to connect with each child and value them as individuals.

New Teacher Comments

"My team teacher and I start each new school year generally planning for the stages of the children we will have in my classroom. Then we spend the first few weeks getting to know each individual child, focusing on making connections, and then adjust our plans accordingly.

Each new year it takes me quite a bit of time to feel comfortable with the new children. They all start out as a blur and then ever so slowly they come into focus with each bringing their own pieces to the whole picture.

At the start of the school year, I make a list of the children and take a photo. Each night when I go home, I try to make a note about at least 4 different children; personality, interests, and 2 weeks later I know so much!"

Who are their families?

Often, when we choose to work with children, we do not realize that by extension that means working with families. The younger the children, the more they are connected to the people in their home, and best practices for young children include partnerships between their two most important worlds, home and school.

Figure 3.6.2: Children's families and homes are important. [27]

In Chapter 8 (Partnering with Families), we visit many aspects of working with families, so here we will simply say, just as your family is important to you and taught you many things, so too it will be for the children and families you work with. We need to conceptualize that families are a child's first teacher, and will be a strong and valuable teaching partner while their child is with us. They are entrusting us with their most prized possession and expecting that we will cherish that child as they do. A privilege indeed!

Who are the teachers?

As can be imagined, the people that are called to teaching are diverse indeed. Each brings their own set of strengths, interests, beliefs, and experiences. There is no "one right way" to teach; no magical guide you can refer to that will tell you exactly what to do in every situation. Every teacher will approach circumstances differently and this is both the joy and the trial of teaching. Your "why" will determine much of what you do. This will blend with your knowledge, experiences, and dispositional traits to guide you on your teaching journey.

Figure 3.6.3: A teacher in action.

With that being said, there are some skills and traits that are helpful for high quality teachers to possess. Some of them are knowledge based and you will learn them as you complete your courses and field experiences. Time and time again we hear new teachers reflect on the importance of realizing that the early childhood classes they are taking are "job training" courses that should be valued with time spent understanding and internalizing the content rather than simply trying to pass with minimal effort to complete them.

> New Teacher Comment
> "In looking back, I wish someone had helped me understand that these ECE classes would be important information for my career. I hate to admit it, but so much of high school and college felt like "busy work" that I did not put in the effort I should have, and now I regret the fact that I did not learn it fully when I should have. I am going back a lot more than other teachers to relearn what I should have in classes."

This will be particularly true with experiences in the field. Most likely, at some point in your course of study, you will be expected to visit programs to observe and participate. While this can be difficult to fit into your schedule, as well as frightening to undertake, these experiences are crucial to developing your skills as a teacher. You can read and study all of the content you can, but until you actually put it into practice with real children, it cannot come to life for you. We encourage you to try as many different experiences with children as you can. Certainly, some class assignments will lend themselves to this endeavor, as will volunteer opportunities in the community. Ask your instructors or others in the field about these types of experiences. You never know what adventures await until you ask.

While your education, knowledge, and experiences will prove vital to your success as a teacher, there is another realm of traits to be considering.

	Pause to Reflect Think back to a teacher that made a positive impression in your life. What traits did that teacher possess that make them stand out to you?

Perhaps you listed some of their education or experiences, but more than likely you included some “dispositional” traits as well. Lillian Katz was one of the first to define some of the dispositions that high-quality teachers seem to possess. While some of these can be studied and developed, most occur naturally in the noted quality teachers.

	High Quality Teachers Here a list of dispositions and traits frequently noted as occurring in high quality teachers: • Reflective • Compassionate • Authentic • Supportive • Respectful • Encouraging • Safe • Trustworthy • Positive • Shares control • Focuses on strengths • High, realistic expectations • Kind • Patient • Dedicated • Knows learners • Engages learners • Ethical • Growth Mindset • Approachable • Present [28]

	Pause to Reflect Look at the list above. What dispositional traits do you currently possess? Are there some you may not yet have, but can develop? How would you plan to develop them?

One key factor successful teachers share is the ability to continually look inward through reflection. In the yellow-green colored boxes, we have asked you to “Pause to Reflect.” Why?

The Reflective Process

Learning occurs when we take risks, when we make mistakes, when we inquire, and when we experience new things. All humans are unique and process their environment from their own unique perspective. Our perspectives are informed by the interaction of nature (genetics) and nurture (environment) and both have an impact on how we process relationships with our families, our friends, our colleagues, etc. These interactions provide us with a foundation that shapes the way we view current and future relationships. As we engage in relationships with children and their families, we use reflective practices to learn more about ourselves, including our dispositions.

As we learn more about ourselves, we have the opportunity to develop broader ways to engage in relationships with the children and families we serve. The experiences we afford children and families cannot happen without the layers of a healthy relationship. Healthy positive relationships that guide and support children are the foundation of quality teaching. Authenticity and compassion are ways of being that create supportive environments for children to flourish. The strength of a teacher’s knowledge about

themselves in relation to others creates opportunities for the children and families they serve to have respectful and reciprocal relationships to ensure that the child is always considered when making the multitude of decisions that are made throughout the day.

You may ask why it is so important for me to know more about myself in relation to others. As the teacher, you are the primary force in the classroom. As the quote below indicates, you, as the teacher, hold the key to creating an environment where children and their families either can flourish or diminish. Being able to value every human comes from our deep knowledge about ourselves. This is done through reflective practice.

Quotable
"I have come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized."
- Haim Ginott

Pause to Reflect
How does this quote resonate with you? Why?

We reflect in many ways, both informally and formally, in private and with others, during the experience and after, knowingly and unknowingly. All are valuable and we encourage you to try many different ways until you internalize the process that makes the most sense for you and moves you toward being an "instrument of inspiration".

Go back to the list of traits above. As you look through it again, do you notice that almost all include relationships in some way? Relationships are at the core of quality teaching.

Relationships Build Connections in the Brain

How can something as intangible as a relationship affect learning and the brain? Relationships are connection, communication, consideration. The brain is very much an active participant in recording, building, and shaping relationships. Research in human brain mapping has recognized a Neuro-Relational approach that tells us:

"Experience, not simple maturation, changes the brain (neuro)." Moreover, "all learning happens in the context of relationships (relational)." [29] When a child shows distress, a caregiver who has a proven relationship with that infant (or child) through appropriate response and respect can help the child return to a sense of calm. This is shown by tracking brain patterns of distressed children who are being monitored with brain imaging machines. The child's brain pattern also has an effect on the caregiver's brain pattern, both regulating each other. Both the child and the caregiver's stress response system synchronize and return to a frequency that is conducive to learning. [30]

The knowledge that healthy, positive, relationships are primary in creating an environment conducive to learning, helps us to structure the emotional environment with supportive and loving exchanges where children and families feel supported and appreciated. Science has shown us the link between body and mind. It has measured emotions and how different emotions affect brain waves and brain development.

We have learned that children, who experience stress, have brains that are wired to react rather than respond. Dr. Bruce Perry, a renowned psychiatrist, who has dedicated his career to the treatment of and research into childhood mental health, has spoken out about how early traumatic experiences shape the brain and what we can do to counteract the detrimental effects this has for life long mental health. The following are two recent quotes from his presentation at a conference:

"You can't access the brain without relationships."

"Lack of belonging activates the stress response. The cortex shuts down and learning can't happen. Connections are the superhighway to the cortex."

That, concisely, helps us to see the value of building relationships that help children and families have that sense of belonging that they deserve to thrive in our school environment.

Who are the other professionals supporting children?

Some of you may think you want to work in some way with children and families, but may not be sure that "teaching" is the right fit for you. Many experts will recommend starting as a teacher assistant or teacher, regardless of your later plans. That is because this experience will prove a valuable addition to whatever career you pursue in the field.

Keep in mind that "teaching" may look very different with different age groups. While the forming of relationships will lie at the core of all quality teaching, the interactions, roles, and duties will vary tremendously. We encourage you to spend some time with different age levels to get a feel for your best "fit".

Whatever age group you are working with, we encourage you to give yourself some time to get comfortable before you decide it is not for you. Teachers go through stages and in the initial stage of survival, it is difficult to discern if it is the age group, the program, or just your limited experience that is feeling overwhelming and uncomfortable.

Below is a table of the stages you can expect to go through over the years on your teaching journey:

Table 3.6.1: Stages of Teaching Journey

Stage	Common Feelings	Common Needs	Advice from the Field
Survival	Fear, inadequacy, doubt, overwhelmed, exhaustion	Support, practical information and advice, understanding, a mentor or coach, resources	Hang in there We've all been there It gets easier Mistakes are learning opportunities…learn a lot
Clarity	Clearer understanding, noticing individual children and needs, a little less fear, moments of adequacy	Continued support, continued resources, a mentor or coach, encouragement to try new things,	You got this We believe in you Keep on trying Focus on what you like to do Enjoy the children
Growth	Knowledgeable, comfortable, take new risks, reflective	Support, encouragement to do things your way, reflection, team teaching	Way to go Keep growing Know your strengths Try new things Step outside your comfort zone
Mastery	Accomplished, proud, invigorated, seeking new challenges,	Branching out, mentoring or coaching others, taking on new roles and responsibilities, community connections, professional organizations	Time to support others Share your strengths Be a role model Consider advocacy Join the profession

Keep in mind that each time you begin a new endeavor (ie: teaching at a new location, new age group, new role) you will move back to survival and through the stages, although the timing may be shorter. Knowing this allows you to give yourself permission to feel the way you need to feel and seek the support you need throughout your career.

Who will be with me?

One of the wonderful aspects of our field is that you are rarely alone. In addition to the children and families, you will have colleagues who can support your journey. You may find yourself working with any or all of the following:

Table 3.6.2: Who Teachers May Work With

Role	Description
Director/Manager/ Principal	Usually runs the day to day operations, oversees teaching staff, involved in hiring, provides resources and support, budgeting.
Office Staff	Keep records, handle paperwork, phone calls, administrative support.

Team Teacher / Assistant/Aide	Additional person you will collaborate with in your classroom. It's common practice to provide support for each other, offer a variety of role models for children and families, offer different strengths.
Specialists	Sometimes a specialist works in the classroom with individual children or the group. Usually providing specialized services in Occupational Therapy (OT) (life skills), Physical Therapy (PT), Speech and Language, or Behavioral intervention they may be part of the teaching team all day or for brief segments throughout the week.
Other Staff Members	From time to time, you may work with custodians, food service providers, health specialists, and others performing duties related to the classroom.
Volunteers	Family or other community members working in a variety of capacities as part of the teaching team.
College Students	From time to time college students may work in the classroom as part of their training.

In addition to the above list, we encourage you to find a mentor or coach, someone you can turn to with questions or when you need support. In the field of early childhood, many of us "pay it forward". Someone provided support for us when we were new to the field with the understanding that we would do the same when our time came. Most early childhood teachers are kind, caring professionals who want to see you succeed. Each time you succeed, our field succeeds and the children and families we work with receive the quality experiences they deserve. Ask your instructor or another resource if they know of any formal or informal mentor programs in your area.

New Teacher Comments
Letter from a Fieldwork Student
My experience is limited. I want to learn. Please don't expect perfection whenever I interact, guide behavior, lead a lesson, or do bulletin boards. Please be patient with me.
My eyes have not yet been trained to see all the students in the classroom most of the time.
Classroom responsibilities will always be there. I'm only with you for a short time. Please take time to explain things to me and do so willingly.
My feelings are real. Please be sensitive to my needs and don't get annoyed if I ask a lot of questions and am uncertain about what to do sometimes. Treat me as you would like to be treated.
I am a unique individual, like each one of your students. Please treasure my being, holding me accountable for my actions, giving me guidelines to follow, and disciplining me in a professional manner, if need be.
I need your support and encouragement to grow. Pointing out what I am doing correctly and occasional praise can be reassuring and help me feel comfortable to take risks and grow.
Please give me constructive feedback, focused on the things I do, without criticizing me.
Please give me the freedom to make decisions and test them out as long as they don't jeopardize the well-being and safety of the students. If I fail, I can learn from my mistakes. Then I'll be better prepared to make decisions life requires of me.
Please invite me to appropriate faculty meetings, seminars, workshops, parent meetings and to join educational organizations, setting a good example for me to follow. I may not be able to attend but I will appreciate your confidence in me as a future fellow professional.
Sincerely,
A New Fieldwork Student [31]

If you want to work with children and families, but are not sure teaching is for you, there are many other career options you are encouraged to explore.

Career options in Early Childhood Education and Child Development

Area	Careers
Child Development Focus	• Teacher Aide • Assistant Teacher* • Associate Teacher* • Teacher* • Master Teacher* • Site Supervisor* • Program/Center Director* • Early Childhood Special Education Teacher** • Curriculum Coordinator** • Infant Specialist • School Age Specialist • Owner/Operator of an Early Childhood Program • Licensed Family Child Care Provider
Elementary Settings	• Instructional Aide • Credentialed Teacher** • Transitional Kindergarten Teacher** • Early Childhood Special Education Teacher** • Afterschool Program Staff • Afterschool Program Coordinator
Adult Education and Training	• Child Development Trainer** • Community College Instructor** • Infant/Toddler Certified Trainer** • Parent Educator** • Vocational Educational Instructor**

Community and Social Services	• Parks and Recreation Aide • Parks and Recreation Program Supervisor • School age Enrichment Program Staff/Leader • Child Life Specialist** • Community Care Licensing Analyst • Family Services Advocate • Resource and Referral Specialist • Early Intervention Specialist** • Home Visitor • Project/Program Administrator in Child Related Agencies** • Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist** • City/County Child Care Coordinator**
Other Related Work Options	• Child Development Researcher** • Child Care and Development Consultant • Playground Designer • Sales/Marketing for Early Education Materials • Child and Family Public Policy Specialist • Pediatric Nurse** • Pediatrician** • Family Therapist**

*Refers to the levels on the Child Development Permit Matrix

**These positions usually require a bachelor's degree and additional training

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3.7: What?

What does that mean?

Like most fields, early childhood has terminology that it is helpful to know. Here is a "starter" list to get you started:

- ECE (Early Childhood Education) and CD (Child Development): often used interchangeably to reflect the science and study of how young children develop and learn.
- Chronological: actual age of a child (or adult) based on their date of birth.
- Program, Site, Center, School: all terms used to reflect early childhood educational locations.
- Pre-K (Pre-Kindergarten and T-K (Transitional-Kindergarten): programs for children the year before they begin kindergarten.
- Teacher: a person who facilitates learning. Sometimes used as a specific label based on educational criteria and other times used more broadly to include all people in a child's life who facilitate that child's development and learning.
- Reflection: a growth mindset focusing on divergent thinking and analysis.
- Divergent thinking; brainstorming or broadly thinking of many solutions
- Convergent thinking: narrowing thoughts to one answer
- Whole Child: looking at all aspects of a child (physical, cognitive, emotional and social)
- Domains of development: a way of labeling the various aspects of a "whole child" (defined further in Chapter 5)
- Observation: the primary means of understanding the children we work with to plan appropriate interactions and experiences (defined further in Chapter 4)
- (DAP) Developmentally Appropriate Practices

	New Teacher Comment "I was so confused at first by all of the terms and the use of letters (acronyms) in my classes and at work. At first, I didn't ask because I thought I should know them all but this just made me less effective. When I finally got over myself and adopted this phrase "I should probably know, but what exactly does that mean?" I was amazed at how helpful people were at explaining. I started a list (part of which is shared above) and pretty soon I was the one sharing what terms meant with other people. This was particularly helpful for me to remember when talking with parents; they don't know either and can be very intimidated (like I was) to ask."

What responsibilities will I have?

Preschool teachers play a central role in ensuring the preschool program is of high quality. They bring a wide range of skills and qualities to the job of guiding young children's learning and development. Since one of them is constantly reflecting, we thought it might be helpful for you to see the basic teacher responsibilities through the lens of a teacher evaluation. Evaluations are a formal way that teachers can assess their strengths and areas for continued growth. The way teachers are evaluated will vary tremendously, but in some way, teachers should be engaging in ongoing reflection on the following core classroom responsibilities.

COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS ECE PRACTICUM

FINAL REFLECTION & FEEDBACK [32]

RATING SCALE				
(Please enter a score of 1-5 in each box below to reflect the following): When calculating scores please consider both effort (process) and outcome (product)				
1	2	3	4	5
Need more effort or experience		Adequate		Mastery
Personal Attributes		Student		Teacher

- Attendance

- Arrives promptly and does not leave early
- Dresses appropriately
- *Appears eager to learn*
- *Maintains ethical code of conduct*
- Learns classroom routine
- *Has a positive attitude*
- Uses appropriate language in speaking and writing
- *Shows initiative*
- *Completes work on time*
- *Balances observation and participation appropriately*
- *Works as part of teaching team*
- *Reflects on and evaluates own behavior and actions*
- *Responds appropriately to feedback and suggestions*
- Demonstrates respect for all
- *Is aware of self as role model*
- Takes safe risks and learns from mistakes

Relationships with Children	Student	Teacher

Appears comfortable around children

- Learns and uses children's names
- Treats children with kindness and respect
- Listens carefully to what children say
- Responds with interest, concern, and care
- Uses nonverbal communication effectively (body language, facial expressions, down to their level,…)
- Uses verbal communication effectively (voice, volume, tone, open-ended, multiple bounces,…)
- Interacts positively with individual children
- Interacts positively with small groups of children
- Interacts positively with large group of children
- Adapts to children's individual needs and styles
- Understands developmentally appropriate practices
- Is informed by observations of child
- Encourages development of the "whole child"
- Supports peer interactions
- Fosters problem solving
- Is alert to total classroom dynamics
- Shows patience and understanding with conflict
- Uses a variety of appropriate guidance strategies
- Overall appears to enjoy time with children

Relationships with Adults	Student	Teacher

- Appears comfortable around adults
- Learns and uses adult's name
- Treats adults with kindness and respect
- Uses nonverbal and verbal communication appropriately and frequently
- Asks for information/support as needed
- Keeps team members informed of incidents/concerns
- Finds ways to support and be part of teaching team
- Shows respect for parents and family members of the children in the class
- Understands the important role families play in children's lives
- Maintains confidentially and professionalism

Segments of Routine and Curriculum	Student	Teacher

- Arrival and greeting of children and families
- Self-care of children (handwashing, toileting, tooth brushing,…)
- Nutrition (meal planning, meal prep, feeding, clean up,…)
- Large Group Time (reading books, telling stories, singing songs, movement activities, transitions, fingerplays, chants, attention getters, group management, modifying for children's interests in the moment, leading and extending discussions, other)
- Inside Time areas and activities (Dramatic Play, Block Play, Science & Math, fine motor, gross motor, other)
- Outside Time areas and activities
- Dismissal and farewell f children and families

Classroom Implementation	Student	Teacher

- Understands classroom flow and procedures
- Tries new experiences in various classroom duties
- Aware of goals of program in planning
- Understands age group, abilities, and interests
- Creates opportunities for children to make choices and learn
- Supports the theory that children learn through play
- Works effectively with teacher in planning process
- Understands planning based on children's interests and development
- Shows skill in preparing written lesson plan
- Plans for children's involvement in their own learning
- Implements activities appropriately
- Shows flexibility in adapting activities as needed
- Reflects on children's response to activities
- Reflection indicates learning from the experience
- Documents learning effectively
- Comfortable implementing activities

Pause to Reflect
Look through the responsibilities above. Which do you think will be the easiest for you to master? The most difficult? Why?

Teaching is a process. We learn more as we practice the art of teaching. Malcolm Gladwell, in his book. "The Tipping Point," says that in order to be an expert at something, you need to spend 10,000 hours doing it. [33] That is quite a long time! Factor in all of the informal teaching that you have done over your lifetime and you still can see that it will take some time to master the skills above and move to the "Mastery" stage of teaching.

In addition to the classroom skills mentioned above, teachers take on a variety of other roles informally that you may not think of right away. These may include:

- Nurse
- Janitor
- Researcher
- Cook
- Interior Designer
- Graphic Designer
- Counselor
- Artist
- Plumber
- Interpreter
- Reporter
- Mediator

- Student
- Performer
- Cheerleader

Pause to Reflect
Look through the additional roles above. Which makes sense for you? Which need further clarification? Can you think of others to add?

New Teacher Comment
"I am surprised each day by the many roles I play. I am glad I am open to trying new things and chipping in where needed. Quality teaching is a team effort in all regards, even if it means plunging the toilet when a child flushes a wooden block and the custodian isn't available."

As mentioned earlier, a key way we reflect is through on-going assessments. These are meant less of a "test of performance on evaluation day" and more of an ongoing feedback opportunity.

Assessment affords us the following:

- A key to gaining the knowledge and skills needed to continually grow and change as early childhood professionals.
- The opportunity to address specific goals and how those goals will improve your teaching.
- A feedback loop that is sometimes referred to as "appreciative inquiry."

Part of the process of becoming an early childhood professional is having a growth mindset. That means that you are able and willing to hear the feedback from others and integrate that feedback through inquiry and reflection. You can hear that feedback in the spirit it is given – for growth.

During the beginning of your career as an early childhood professional, you may engage with a coach, who is often a part of the staff at your program that can help you to improve your knowledge and skills. One of the best ways for someone to coach you is to look at your strengths and to support you with your challenges. Judy Jablon, the author of *Coaching with Powerful Interactions*, shares about the importance of strength-based coaching. Here is an example of what that may look like:

> *You have asked your lead teacher to record you reading to a large group of children. Of course, you are nervous, but you trust your lead teacher to be honest and to provide feedback for growth. Later that day, you meet together to discuss together what you both see on the recording. After you both view the recording, your lead teacher begins the discussion:*
>
> ***Lead Teacher** : What do you think about this after viewing the recording?*
>
> ***You** : I could tell that I was nervous at the beginning, but once the children were engaged, a sense of calm came over me, and I felt pretty good about it.*
>
> ***Lead Teacher** : Do you see any areas where you can grow and if so, what advice would you like from me?*
>
> ***You** : One of the areas that I struggled with is allowing the children to freely express themselves as I was reading. I notice that you are much more comfortable with that when you read to the children. I would love to read with the ease that you do.*
>
> ***Lead Teacher** : Thank you for noticing. Feeling the ease that you mention took a lot of time and guidance with the help of a coach during my early years of teaching. What she taught me with patience and compassion was really a gift. A gift that I am able to share with new teachers.*
>
> ***You** : I would like to review the recording a bit more and then try it again next week. I plan to practice reading the book to see if that will give me more comfort. Thank you for being supportive and kind. I appreciate our work together.*

New Teacher Comment
"I get very nervous for assessments but they end up being very helpful. I have started doing "self-assessments" of myself a lot and it helps to be prepared when my director comes to do my formal one.
Although I feel very uncomfortable doing it, I am finding that videoing myself and watching it is the best way for me to get a true picture of my teaching."

What is a Professional Portfolio?

If an assessment can give you a snapshot of your strengths, imagine what an entire collection can do? That is the essence of a professional portfolio. It is a compilation of all of your strengths, a "brag book" if you will. Most teachers will use a 3 ring notebook or e-portfolio to house their resume, certificates, immunizations, letters of recommendations and samples of their professional work (activity plans, photos, work samples, resources, newsletters, etc.) and professional statements about important concepts (philosophy, core beliefs, best practices, etc.) These can be from classes, work-related endeavors, community service, anywhere that highlights your skills. We encourage you to begin collecting items now and add them often.

New Teacher Comment
"I get so many compliments on my professional portfolio. I decorated it to reflect me and use it often. I brought it on interviews, set it out at Open House, and keep it in my work area to add to often.
I was so nervous in my interviews that I was glad I had my portfolio to show. I found it helped with talking points and helped me show my work better than if I had just explained it. For one interview, I was so nervous that I just walked in, said "hi" and handed them the portfolio. They were impressed and I got the job!"

New Teacher Comments – Advice as you begin your journey

- At the beginning, I felt overwhelmed. It gets better!
- Go to your site's website and learn about their philosophy and school. It helps give an understanding of why they do what they do.
- Always plan ahead and stay on top of things!
- Smile and enjoy the experience. This is what you want to do.
- Get to know the children and your coworkers as soon as you can.
- Intimidating at first, but you will feel comfortable after a while.
- Visit a few times before you start to see how they dress and do things.
- Jump in as soon as you feel comfortable and do things early.
- Feel comfortable to talk about any questions or concerns.
- Observe as much as you can. Come early and stay late if needed.
- Choose your site carefully.
- Step out of your comfort zone.
- Communication is the key!
- Be flexible
- Go back to your previous class materials; it will help a lot
- View your "mistakes" as learning opportunities and always grow from them!
- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Ask for feedback
- Pay it forward when you can
- Find out procedures right away (time card, belongings, lunch,…)
- Don't expect perfection from yourself or others
- Support others and they will do the same for you
- Begin a resource file and keep adding to it

Pause to Reflect
What advice stands out for you? Why? How will you use it?

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3.8: When?

When are most programs open?

There are many different types of programs and the hours of operation, as well as options for attendance, vary. In general, you will find that most programs will operate some or all of the days between Monday and Friday. Typical program hours include:

- Full Day: Monday – Friday from early morning (6 or 7 am) through evening (5 to 7 pm)
- Half Day: Monday-Friday either morning or afternoon.
- Part Days: Usually 2 or 3 days Monday-Friday
- Before and after school programs for elementary school children usually follow a Full Day schedule when the children are not in school
- Most full day programs will include a rest time for children, most half days will not.
- There may be very few programs with evening or weekend options, but the traditional workweek is still the majority of when programs operate.

When will I be working?

If you define a ***career*** as one's life work, and a ***job*** as something you do to make money during designated hours, working with children will most definitely be a ***career***.

Inside the Classroom

As seen in the assessment earlier in this chapter, early childhood professionals take on a variety of tasks inside the classroom. During the workday, teachers will be expected to:

- Carefully plan the classroom environment.
- Plan interactions and intentional learning experiences.
- Create warm, respectful relationships with children and families.
- Know how to handle conflict with others.
- Plan a consistent, yet flexible daily routine.
- Extend children's development and learning.
- Acknowledge and support children's accomplishments.
- Respond, instead of reacting.
- Find meaningful ways to communicate and collaborate with families.
- Be a positive role model.
- Advocate for children and families.
- Maintain an environment that supports health, safety, and nutrition.
- Collaborate with team teachers and other colleagues
- Attend staff meetings
- Adhere to ethical practices

Outside the Classroom

There will also be a variety of tasks to perform outside of the classroom. These will include:

- Preparing materials
- Researching topics
- Collecting resources
- Attending workshops and conferences
- Joining and participating in professional organizations
- Developing relationships with community resources and advocacy
- Continuing your education

New Teacher Comments
" I now understand the sign that sits on my directors' desk, 'A TEACHER'S WORK IS NEVER DONE.'"
"I'm learning that as a new teacher I am spending much of my time outside of work preparing materials for my class. My friends joke about how I now look at any item to figure out how I might use it. The other day I asked them to save their toilet paper rolls and they laughingly agreed."
"When teachers aren't with their classes, they are thinking about their classes."

Pause to Reflect
Was this what you were expecting? Why or why not?

When should I become more involved than just taking classes?

Because a career in early childhood education is multifaceted, taking classes is a necessary and beneficial start. So is volunteering whenever you can to gain experience. In addition, we encourage you to jump in and get as involved as you like in the profession. Perhaps you want to join attend a workshop or conference? Perhaps you want to join an organization.

As mentioned throughout the course, the "mother ship" of early childhood professionals is the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We mention them again here as a resource for your professional growth and development. Many high quality programs and teachers adhere to their standards and are members of this organization.

While NAEYC is the primary organization for Early Childhood Professionals (naeyc.org), other organizations support our field as well. Here are a few of them:

- Child Care Exchange
- California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAAEYC is an affiliate of NAEYC)
- Council for Professional Development
- Professional Association for Children
- Children's Defense Fund
- National Head Start Association
- World Association of Early Educators
- National Child Care Association
- High Scope
- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

There are many more, but this is just a taste of how rich the field is in supporting children and families and the practitioners that serve them.

We also encourage you to "look local". Many community colleges offer clubs and organizations on campus that may feel more comfortable to start with. At College of the Canyons, you may want to look into TEACH or the Future Educators Club. Contact TEACH@canyons.edu to get started.

New Teacher Comments
"I am so happy I found our campus education club. I enjoy the meetings and have met so many people. I actually heard about my job through someone at a meeting who mentioned her program was hiring.
I attended my first workshop and was blown away. I learned so much and had so much fun. I'm definitely signing up for more!"

You might also consider exploring the California (CA) Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Registry: https://www.caregistry.org .The "Registry" is a web-based system designed to track and promote the employment,

training, and education accomplishments of the early care and education ECE teachers and providers.

	Pause to Reflect What suggestions might you pursue to get “more involved” in the field?

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3.9: Where?

Where do early childhood programs take place?

In Chapter 6 (Curriculum) and Chapter 7 (Learning Environments), you will be introduced to different types of programs, which sometimes determines where they occur. For now, here is a list of the most common places for young children to develop and grow:

- **The child's home** - this is often a child's first classroom and many important skills are developed here
- **Someone else's home** - often-called home daycare or family childcare, there are a variety of types of programs that are run inside caregivers' homes.
- **A church, synagogue, or similar establishment** - often built for their own programs that take place on the weekends, these are empty during the week and can accommodate multiple uses. Programs operating in such locations may or may not be affiliated with the establishment that owns the building.
- **A school setting** - either specifically designed for the age group served or modified to meet the needs of various ages.
- **A park or community center** – some community spaces are dedicated to serving children in a variety of ways.
- **Online** - synchronously (at the same time) or asynchronously (at different times independently)

New Teacher Comments
"In my practicum class, I was surprised to learn about all of the different places we could train. I thought a school setting was the only place, but there were so many wonderful options.
COVID 19 meant that our in-person program needed to be moved to an online format. Some teachers got really creative with Zoom, Google Classroom, video chats, and other technology. One of my colleagues started with show and tell where she had each child in the class take a turn sharing whatever they wanted about their home. We saw bedrooms, favorite toys and met so many pets and family members. It was a wonderful way to connect!
Interviewing different places I learned that it is not the building but what goes on inside and outside that makes the magic happen."

Where do I go to get more involved?

The resources above in the "When" section are a great place to get started. Ask your instructor if you would like to inquire further.

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3.10: How?

As stated above, there are many careers related to working with children and families. Since many of you will look into teaching at some point in your early childhood career, let us take a closer look at how that might happen.

As you hone many of the interpersonal traits and dispositions needed, you will also be taking classes to complete the formal education necessary to meet program requirements. This link will take you to our department website where you are able to find more information specific to your early childhood studies here at College of the Canyons, including your needed coursework and valuable academic information.

Professional Pathways

The field of Early Childhood Education has multiple pathways for those who are interested in directly or indirectly working with children and families. This section will explore the education needed to become an early childhood professional, career options, and continuation of education and professional development.

Education

There are many entrance points along the career path in Early Childhood Education. The following pathways are to be used for those who are seeking employment in the State of California. Each state has different requirements and since this text originated in California for the students at College of the Canyons, we will speak specifically for our students and our state.

Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)

While the CDA has been around for 45 years, this is most recognized in states that do not have comprehensive higher education systems in Child Development or Early Childhood Education. Here is some key information taken directly from the CDA website:

- The CDA is based on a core set of competency standards, which guide early care professionals as they work toward becoming qualified teachers of young children.
- The Council works to ensure that the nationally transferable CDA is a credible and valid credential, recognized by the profession as a vital part of professional development.
- CDAs have knowledge of how to put the CDA Competency Standards into practice and understanding of why those standards help children move with success from one developmental stage to another. CDAs know how to nurture the emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development of children. [34]

For those who hold a CDA Credential, in California, it can be used in the following ways in California:

- Earn your California Child Development Associate Teacher Permit (see permit matrix option 2 under Associate Teacher)
- You can use them as transferable units to a higher education program of study to continue with the additional units you would need to work in a state-funded early education center

Associates Degree for Transfer (ADT) in Early Childhood Education and/or Certificates of Achievement

The California Community College System, to which College of the Canyons belongs, offers several options in the Early Childhood course of study. You can earn an associate's degree, which requires that you complete 24 specific units of ECE along with the general education requirements of an associate's degree. The Associate's Degree you earn at College of the Canyons is a transfer degree, which means that with your degree, you will be accepted at a California State University and you would enter as a junior (provided that you are continuing your education in either Child Development or a related field).

You also can earn one or more of the certificates of specialization that we currently offer for our students. Currently, those certificates include specializations in:

- Preschool – this is one that you can earn along with your ADT, as it requires all of the courses that you took for your ADT.
- Infant-Toddler
- School – Age
- Special Education
- Supervision and Administration of Children's Programs

It is helpful to make an appointment with a counselor to ensure that you are taking the right courses for general education as well as map out your course of study. It is also important that you speak with the Early Childhood Education department to gain a better

understanding of the specific eight courses you need to take to earn your degree or certificate and to follow the suggestions of taking them in order.

Our course of study at College of the Canyons:

- ECE 100 Principles and Practices of Early Childhood Education (this is the class you are currently enrolled in)
- ECE 101 Child Growth and Development
- ECE 102 Child, Family, and Community
- ECE 103 Observation and Assessment
- ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education
- ECE 105 Health, Safety, and Nutrition in Early Childhood Education
- ECE 106 The Role of Equity and Diversity in Early Childhood Education
- ECE 200 Practicum – Field Experience

The following three courses require prior coursework that must be completed with a passing grade before enrollment (called pre-requisites):

- ECE 103 Observation and Assessment requires ECE 100
- ECE 104 Curriculum for Young Children also requires ECE 100
- ECE 200 Practicum/Field Experience requires ECE 100, 101, 102, 103, and 104

We provide this information so you can plan your schedule accordingly should you want to complete your degree in 2 years. Taking them in chronological order is the best strategy when possible, as the information and experiences build upon each other.

Bachelor's Degree

Several institutions of Higher Education offer Bachelor's degrees for those pursuing a career in working with children. In-state, those institutions can be California State Universities (CSU's), University of California (UC's), or private institutions. One of the best ways to choose an institution is to find one that meets your financial needs and the needs you have as a student to be successful.

Master's Degree

As indicated above, the same is true for Master's Degrees. Again, it is best to find an institution that will work best for you and your career goals.

Doctoral Degree

Fewer higher education institutions offer doctoral degrees in Child Development/Early Childhood Education. However, in the state of California, a group of higher education faculty is currently working with institutions to offer this degree. We know from this study - ***Transforming the Workforce 0 – 8*** , that the more knowledge a practitioner has about how children grow and develop, the more prepared that practitioner is to provide high quality environments that are supportive and responsive to the needs of children and their families.

Child Development Permit

In response to the implementation of state-subsidized preschool, California developed a permit structure that details what the personnel at each level are authorized to do and the education and experience requirements for those levels. The current six-level permit structure is based upon a career ladder approach with each level increasing in coursework preparation and commensurate authorization or responsibility. Please see the Appendix for the Permit Matrix. Most coursework is completed by candidates at community colleges. [35]

New Teacher Comments

When I started my first ECE class I thought I would get my degree, get a job, and be done. Now I know that was just the start. To be a good teacher is to be a lifelong learner.

Don't be afraid to join organizations and go to workshops and conferences. I was petrified to go to my first one, but it was so much fun. I learned a lot that I could instantly take back to my classroom and met so many new and helpful people.

Find a more seasoned teacher or someone you feel comfortable with. You will have many questions and need a sounding board. Later, when you know more, you can 'pay it forward' with another new teacher.

Pause to Reflect

What will help you as you begin your journey into the world of Early Childhood Education? What advice might you have for others as they begin their own journey?

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3.11: In Closing

In this chapter, we visited various aspects of the early childhood teaching profession. We focused on clarifying your “why”, who the children, families, and teachers are, what is needed to be a successful early childhood professional, when to get started, where to access information and how to become the best professional you can be.

We focused on many questions throughout this chapter. The remaining chapters will focus on “how”. In Chapter 4 (Observation and Assessment), you will discover how to meaningfully observe and assess children in order to provide quality learning experiences and environments that meet their individual and group needs.

Contributing Author to this Chapter

Nikki Savage

References

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

Learning Objective

- Develop observational skills that will form the foundation of working effectively with young children.

4.1: NAEYC Standards
4.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies
4.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)
4.4: Preview
4.5: The Purpose of Observation
4.6: Partnerships with Families
4.7: In Closing

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4.1: NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

Standard 3 : Observing, documenting, and assessing to support young children and families.

Standard 6 : Becoming a professional

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4.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

The following competencies are addressed in this chapter:

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Professionalism
- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance
- Special Needs and Inclusion

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4.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: – I-1.1-, I-1.2, I-1.3, I-1.6, I-1.7, I-1.10

Principles: P-1.1, P-1.2, P-1.4, P-1.5, P-6, P-1.7,

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals: I-2.1, I-2.2, I-2.3, I-2.4, I-2.5, I-2.6, I-2.7, I-2.8

Principles: P-2.4, P-2.6, P-2.7, P-2.8, P-2.12, P-2.13

Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues (Co-Workers and Employers)

Ideals: I-3A.3, I-3B.1

Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Ideals: I-4.1, I-4.2, I-4.5

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4.4: Preview

As discussed in chapter 2, the field of early care and education relies on developmental and learning theories to guide our practices. Not only do theories help us to better understand a child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs, theories help us to see each child as a unique learner and can also help us to set appropriate expectations. With the information we uncover by watching and listening to children, we can provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities so they can thrive. In this chapter, we will examine how observation techniques are used to connect theory principles to practical applications. In other words, we will explore how teachers can incorporate observation, documentation, and assessment into their daily routines in order to effectively work with children and their families.

In the field of early care and education, the pursuit of high-quality care is a top priority. Throughout the day, preschool teachers have numerous tasks and responsibilities. In addition to providing a safe and nurturing environment, teachers must plan effective curriculum, assess development, decorate the classroom, stock the shelves with age-appropriate materials, and they must develop respectful relationships with children and their families. So you might be wondering, what does this all have to do with observation, documentation, and assessment? To effectively support a child's development and to help them thrive, preschool teachers are expected to be accountable and intentional with every interaction and experience. Let's take a closer look and examine how teachers utilize observation, documentation, and assessment to maintain a high-quality learning environment.

Pause to Reflect

How would you define observation? Compare your definition to the one below.

According to Gordon and Browne (2016) "Observing is more than ordinary supervision. It takes energy and concentration to become an accurate observer." [36] It also takes time and practice to learn how to distinguish the difference between trivial details and detailed data. Once teachers master ***objective*** observation techniques and they can recognize their own ***biases*** , they are ready to conduct purposeful observations and support children's play, learning, growth, and development.

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4.5: The Purpose of Observation

Regular and systematic observations allow us to reflect on all aspects of our job as early childhood educators. To ensure high-quality practices we should observe the program environment, the interactions between the children and teachers, and each child's development. With the information we gather from on-going observations we can:

- Improve teaching practices
- Plan curriculum
- Assess children's development
- Partner with families

Let's review each concept more closely to better understand *why we observe*.

To Improve Teaching Practices

As we watch and listen to children throughout the day, we begin to see them for who they are. With each interaction and experience, we can see how children process information and how they socialize with their peers. We can learn so much about a child if we take the time to watch, listen, and record on a daily basis. Teachers are sometimes influenced by their own ideas of how children should behave. Truth be told, everything passes through a filter that is based on the observer's beliefs, cultural practices, and personal experiences. As observers, we must be aware that our own biases can impact our objectivity. To gain perspective and to be most effective, we must train ourselves to slow down and step back, we must try to focus on what the child is actually doing, rather than judging how they are doing it or assuming why they are doing it. To practice becoming more objective, imagine you are a camera taking snapshots of key moments. As you observe the children in your care - practice recording just the facts. [37]

To Plan Effective Curriculum

When I was a teacher some years ago, I planned activities and set up the environment based on my interests and ideas of what I thought children should be learning. Today I realize that optimal learning occurs when curriculum reflects the children's interests. To uncover their interests, teachers need to observe each child as an individual, in addition to observing both small and large group interactions. Let's look at the curriculum cycle to examine best practices in *how to use observation* to plan effective curriculum.

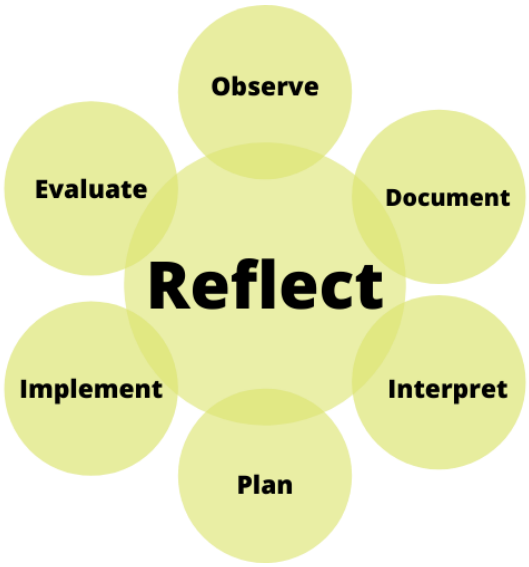


Figure 4.5.1: Reflection. [38]

Reflect

Reflective Practice is at the center of the curriculum planning cycle. Reflective practice helps us to consider our caregiving practices and to develop greater self-awareness so we can be more sensitive and responsive to the children we care for. As we look, listen, and record the conversations and interactions of each child, we are collecting valuable insight. With each observation, we are

learning specific details about the children's interests and abilities, their play patterns, social behaviors, problem-solving skills, and much, much more. With the information we gather, we can reflect on our caregiving practices and look at what we are doing well in addition to where we can improve. To ensure best practices, we can think about how we can become more responsive and how we can meet each child where they are in order to best support their individual needs. Reflective practice can be done alone or with co-workers - if you are team teaching. To create an inclusive learning environment that engages each child in meaningful ways, here are some prompts to help you begin reflecting on your practices:

- look at the space, materials, and daily schedule;
- Consider the cultural diversity of families;
- Think about whether or caregiving routines are meaningful;
- Think about how you are fostering relationships with families
- Consider if you are using a "one size fits all" approach
- Think about if your expectations for children match up with the age and stage of their development
- Reflect on how you are guiding children's behavior

Let's take a closer look at how the cycle works to help us plan and implement a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Observe

To gather useful information about each child, we must first remember to use an ***objective lens***. In other words, rather than assuming you know what a child is thinking or doing, it is important to learn the art of observing. To gather authentic evidence, we must learn how to look and listen with an open mind. We must learn to "see" each child for who they are rather than for who we want them to be or who we think they should be. Be assured, learning to be an objective observer is a skill that requires patience and practice. As you begin to incorporate observation into your daily routine, here are a few things to think about:

1. **Who** should I observe? Quite simply - every child needs to be observed. Some children may stand out more than others, and you may connect to certain children more than others. In either case, be aware and be mindful to set time aside to observe each child in your care.
2. **When** should I observe? It is highly suggested that you observe at various times throughout the day – during both morning and afternoon routines. Some key times may include during drop-off and pick-up times, during planned or teacher-directed activities, during open exploration or child-initiated activities. You may have ***spontaneous observations*** - which are special moments or interactions that unexpectedly pop up, and you may have ***planned observations*** - which are scheduled observations that are more focused around collecting evidence about a particular skill set, interaction, or behavior.
3. **Where** should I observe? You should observe EVERYWHERE! Because children can behave differently when they are indoors as compared to when they are outdoors, it's important to capture them interacting in both settings.
4. **What** should I observe? To understand the "***whole child***" you need to observe their social interactions, their physical development, how they manage their emotions and feelings, how they problem-solve when tasked with new developmental skills, how they communicate with their peers and adults, and how they use materials and follow directions. In other words – EVERYTHING a child does and says! In addition to observing each child as an individual, it's important to look at small group interactions, along with large group interactions.
5. **How** should I observe? To capture all the various moments, you need to know when to step in and when to step back. Sometimes we quietly watch as moments occur, and sometimes we are there to ask questions and prompt (or scaffold) children's learning. Sometimes we can record our observations at that moment as they occur, and sometimes we have to wait to jot down what we heard or saw at a later time.

Document

As we observe, we must record what we see and hear exactly as it happens. There are several tools and techniques that can be used to document our observations. As you continue along the Early Childhood Education / Child Development pathway, you may take a class on "Observation and Assessment" which will provide you with detailed information on how to effectively document a child's development. As for now, we will take a brief look at some of the tools and techniques you may want to use as part of your daily routine.

Figure 4.5.2: Documenting what you observe is an important part of the process. [39]

Tools to Use In Your Daily Routine

Running Record

To gather authentic evidence of everything you see and hear a child doing during a specific timeframe, you can use a **running record**. The primary goal of using a running record is to "obtain a detailed, objective account of behavior without inference, interpretations, or evaluations". According to Bentzen, you will know you have gathered good evidence when you can close your eyes and you can "see" the images in your mind as they are described in your running record. [40]

Anecdotal Record

Whereas a running record can be used to gather general information more spontaneously, anecdotal records are brief, focused accounts of a specific event or activity. An anecdotal record is "an informal observation method often used by teachers as an aid to understanding the child's personality or behavior." [41] Anecdotal records, also referred to as "anecdotal notes," are direct observations of a child that offer a window of opportunity to see into a child's actions, interactions, and reactions to people and events. They are an excellent tool that provides you with a collection of narratives that can be used to showcase a child's progress over time.

Developmental Checklists

To track a child's growth development and development in all of the developmental domains including physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional you will want to use a developmental checklist. With a checklist, you can easily see what a child can do, as well as note the areas of development that need further support. Teachers can create their own checklists based on certain skill sets, or to look at a child's full range of development they can download a formal developmental milestone checklist from a reputable source (e.g., the CDC Developmental Milestones (https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/...checklists.pdf). Checklists can be used to track a large group of children or an individual child.

Frequency Counts

To gather information about a child's interests, social interactions, play patterns, and temperamental traits you can use a frequency count chart. As you observe the children at play, a tally mark is made every time the noted behavior or action occurs within a set timeframe. Frequency counts are also used to track undesirable or challenging behaviors, as well as prosocial behaviors.

Work Samples

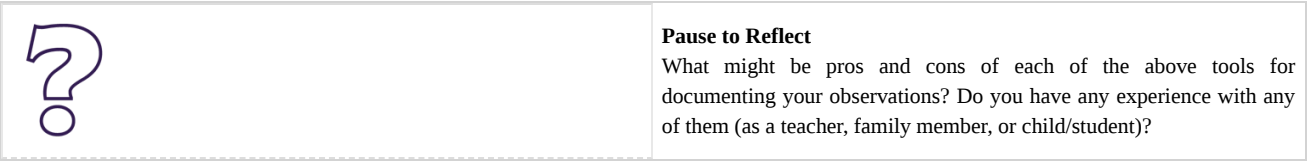
Creating a work sample requires more effort than hanging a child's picture on the wall. A work sample provides tangible evidence of a child's effort, progress, and achievement. Not only does a work sample highlight the final product , but it can also highlight the process. To collect **authentic evidence**, with every work sample you need to include the date and a brief caption that explains the child's learning experience.

Documentation Boards

In addition to using the above tools and techniques to record observations, teachers can use **documentation boards or panels** to highlight the learning activities that are happening throughout the week, month, and year. Not only do families enjoy seeing their child's work posted, but children can also be empowered by seeing all that they have accomplished. Documentation boards are another great way to validate progress over time. Documentation boards can be made with the children as a project or can be assembled by the teacher or parent volunteer. Typically, documentation boards are posted on the wall for all to see and they usually showcase the following information:

- Learning goal and objectives

- Children's language development
- The process and complete project
- The milestones of development
- Photos with detailed captions



Pause to Reflect
What might be pros and cons of each of the above tools for documenting your observations? Do you have any experience with any of them (as a teacher, family member, or child/student)?

Interpret

After you have captured key evidence, you must now make sense of it all. In other words, you must try to figure out what it all means. As you begin to analyze and interpret your documentation, you will want to compare your current observations to previous observations. As you compare observations, you will want to look for play patterns and track social interactions. You will also want to look for changes in behavior and look for possible triggers (antecedents) when addressing challenging behaviors.

Lastly, you will want to note any new milestones that have developed since the last observation. To help you analyze and interpret your observation data, you will want to ask yourself some reflective questions. Here are some suggested questions:

- What have I learned about this child?
- What are their current interests – who do they play with and what activity centers or areas do they migrate to the most?
- Has this child developed any new skills or mastered any milestones?
- How did this child approach new activities or problem-solve when faced with a challenge?
- How long does the child usually stay focused on a task?
- Is this behavior "typical" for this child?
- *What can I plan to support and encourage this child to progress along at a developmentally appropriate pace?

Another vital step in interpreting your observations is to reflect and connect your observation data to developmental theories. ECE theories provide foundational principles that we use to guide our practices and plan developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Plan

Once you have interpreted your observation data (asked questions, looked for patterns, noted any changes in growth and development) and you have analyzed theory principles, it is time to plan curriculum. First, let's define curriculum . According to Epstein (2007), c urriculum is "the knowledge and skills teachers are expected to teach and children are expected to learn, and the plans for experiences through which learning will take place (p. 5). I would like to define curriculum as "the activities, experiences, and interactions a child may have throughout their day." Curriculum supports learning and play and it influences a whole child's growth and development. As teachers set goals and make plans, they should consider that some curriculum will be planned, while some curriculum will emerge. As you plan your curriculum, you are encouraged to think about the following aspects of curriculum – the environment, materials, and interactions. For example,

- **How is the environment set up** – is it overstimulating, cluttered, or inviting and well organized?
- **What is the mood and tone of the classroom** – is it calm or chaotic? Do the children appear happy and engaged? Have you interacted with the children?
- **Are there enough materials available** – are children having to wait long periods of time for items and are there conflicts because of limited materials ?
- **Do the materials reflect the children's interests** - are they engaging and accessible?
- **What are the social interactions** - who is playing with whom, are there social cliques, is anyone playing alone?
- **Are the activities appropriate** - do they support development in all areas of learning?
- **Are there a variety of activities to encourage both individualized play and cooperative play**? [42]

Implementation

Probably the more joyful part of our job is implementing curriculum and seeing the children engage in new activities. It is common to hear teachers say that the highlight of their day is "seeing the lightbulb go on" as children make valuable connections to what the teacher has planned and as the children master new skill sets. An important part of implementation is understanding **differentiated instruction**. According to Gordon and Browne (2016) when teachers can implement activities and materials to match the interests

and skill level of each child, they are utilizing developmentally appropriate practices. For light bulbs to go off, intentional teachers must remember to “tailor what is taught to what a child is ready and willing to learn.”

Evaluate

Once you have planned your curriculum, gathered your materials, set up your environment, and implemented your activities, you will need to observe, document, and interpret the interactions so that you can evaluate and plan for the next step. Based on whether the children mastered the goals, expectations, and met the learning outcomes will determine your next step. For example, if the children can quickly and easily complete the task, you may have to consider adding more steps or extending the activity to challenge the children. If some children were unable to complete the task or appeared uninterested, you may consider how to better scaffold their learning either through peer interactions or by redefining the steps to complete the activity. As you evaluate your implemented activities here are some questions that you want to think about:

- How did the child approach the activity and how long did the child stay engaged?
- What problem-solving strategies did the child use?
- Did the child follow the intended directions or find alternative approaches?
- Who did the child interact with?

Based on your answers, you will decide on what is in the child’s best interest and how to proceed moving forward.

Figure 4.5.3: Evaluating the curriculum you implement helps you decide how to move forward. [43]

To Assess Children’s Development

Early childhood educators use assessments to showcase critical information about a child’s growth and development. As suggested by Gordon and Brown (2016) “Children are evaluated because teachers and parents want to know what the children are learning.” It is important to note that “assessment is not testing.” [44]

Assessment is, however, a critical part of a high-quality early childhood program and is used to :

- Provide a record of growth in all developmental areas: cognitive, physical/motor, language, social-emotional, and approaches to learning.
- Identify children who may need additional support and determine if there is a need for intervention or support services.
- Help educators plan individualized instruction for a child or for a group of children that are at the same stage of development.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses within a program and information on how well the program meets the goals and needs of the children.
- Provide a common ground between educators and parents or families to use in collaborating on a strategy to support their child.

Pause to Reflect
What is assessment and why is it important? As defined by Gordon & Browne (2016) assessment is “an evaluation or determination of the importance disposition, or state something or someone, such as evaluating a child’s skills, a classroom environment or a teacher’s effectiveness” [45] How could you explain what is assessment it and why assessment is important in your own words?

The key to a good assessment is observation. [46] Whether you obtain your observation evidence through spontaneous or planned observations, it is suggested that you document your observations by utilizing various tools and techniques (e.g. running records, anecdotal notes, checklists, frequency counts, work samples, learning stories). As teachers watch children in natural settings, they can gather evidence that can then be used to track a child’s learning, growth, and development throughout the school year. To start the assessment process, here is a road map for you to follow:

- Step 1: Gather Baseline Data
- Step 2 : Monitor Each Child's Progress
- Step 3 : Have a Systematic Plan in Place

Let's look at each step more closely.

Step 1. Establish a Baseline

Before you can assess a child's development, you must get to know your child. The first step is to gather "baseline" information. Through ongoing observation, you learn about each child's strengths, interests, and skills. While observing you may also uncover a child's unique learning styles, needs, or possible barriers that may limit them from optimal learning opportunities. For example, you may notice that when a child arrives in the morning, they tend to sit quietly at the table, and they don't engage with other children or join in play activities. As you track the behavior, you begin to see a pattern that when a teacher sits with the child and they read a story together, the child warms up much faster than when left alone. Baseline information provides you with a starting point that can help you build a respectful relationship with each child in your class

Step 2. Monitor Progress

"The goal of observing children is to understand them better" (Gordon & Browne, 2016, p.119). Observations help guide our decisions, inform our practices, and help us to develop a plan of action that best fits each child's individual needs. With every observation, we can begin to see how all the pieces fit together to make the **whole child**. To successfully monitor a child's progress, we must look at the following:

- The child's social interactions
- The child's play preferences
- How the child handles their feelings and emotions
- The timeframe in which the child masters developmental milestones
- How the child processes information and is able to move onto to the next activity or level

With each observation, you gather more information and more evidence that can be used to assess the child's development.

Step 3. A Systematic Plan

Once you have gathered an array of evidence, it is time to organize it. There are two different types of assessment systems:

1. Program-developed child assessment tools are developed to align with a specific program's philosophy and curriculum.
2. Published child assessment tools have been researched and tested and are accepted as a credible source in assessing children's development.

Forms of Assessment

Whichever system is in place at your program, you will need to be trained accordingly. In this section, we will highlight the use of portfolios and learning stories as well as discuss the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP, 2015) as featured assessment systems that can be used to track a child's development.

Portfolios

Portfolios help teachers organize all the work samples, anecdotal notes, checklists, and learning stories that they have been collected for each child throughout the school year. A portfolio is similar to a traditional photograph album, but it is much more than an album. A portfolio is "an intentional compilation of materials and resources collected over time" (Gordon and Browne, 2016, p. 112). A portfolio is not an assessment tool in and of itself, it is a collection written observation notes for each photo and work sample. The evidence clearly documents a child's progression over time. Portfolios are important tools in helping to facilitate a partnership between teachers and parents. During conferences, teachers can showcase the portfolio as they share anecdotes of the child's progress. Parents (and children) enjoy seeing all the achievements and chronological growth that has occurred during the school year.

Digital portfolios or **e-Portfolios** are trending now as technology has become more accessible. Not only do e-Portfolios enable teachers to document children's activities faster, but teachers can also now post information and communicate with families on a regular basis, rather than waiting until the end of the school year for a traditional family conference.

What are the strengths of portfolios?

- Information in a portfolio is organized in a chronological order
- Portfolios promote a shared approach to decision making that can include the parent and child and teacher.
- Portfolios do not have the same constraints and narrow focus as standardized tests.
- Portfolios help teachers to keep track of a child's development over time
- Portfolios can help teachers develop richer relationships with the children in their classroom

What are the limitations of portfolios?

- To create and maintain a portfolio requires a large investment of time and energy
- Currently, there are no valid grading criteria to evaluate portfolios since outcomes can vary from one child to another
- Maintaining objectively can be challenging

Learning Stories

Learning Stories are written records that document what a teacher has observed a child doing. It becomes an actual learning story when the teacher adds his or her interpretation of the child's dispositions toward learning - such as grit, courage, curiosity, and perseverance. The story may be as short as one paragraph or as long as one page. Much like an anecdotal record, teachers observe and document brief moments as a child engages with peers or completes a task. With the learning story, however, the teacher connects learning goals and highlights developmental milestones that the child is mastering. With learning stories, teachers tend to focus on what the child can do rather than what they can't do. With almost all learning stories, teachers will take photographs (or video) to include with the written story.

What are the strengths of learning stories?

- By listening to, observing, and recording children's explorations, you send them a clear message that you value their ideas and thinking.
- As the teacher shares the Learning Story with the child, the child has the opportunity to reflect on his or her own development, thinking, and learning.
- The whole class can listen and participates in each other's stories and ideas.
- Learning stories provide parents with insight into how teachers plan for their children's learning.
- Parents uncover that teachers are thoughtful and continuous learners.
- Learning Stories encourage families and children to talk about school experiences.
- Learning Stories showcase how powerful and capable children really are

What are the limitations of learning stories?

- The quality of the learning story depends on the teacher's own subjectivity (ie: viewpoints, values, and feelings towards the child)
- Learning stories provide only a small snapshot of a child's learning.
- It takes time to write a learning story (teachers may only be able to write 1 or 2 stories per month) and critics argue that this may limit the amount of information a teacher will need to truly track a child's development
- Because learning stories are relatively new, there aren't official guidelines on how often to write learning stories and what exactly they should be included
- Learning stories are written up after the event or interaction has actually happened - so teachers need to have a good and accurate memory!

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)

The **Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)** is a standardized assessment tool that was developed by the California Department of Education (CDE), Child Development Division (CDD). Programs that are sponsored by the CDE, who serve children ages birth through 12 years of age (for example Lab schools, Head Start Programs, Early Start Programs, before and after school programs, SELPA programs, and other programs funded by Title V) are most likely to use the DRDP. The assessment results are intended to guide program improvement and to support teachers as develop curriculum to meet children's individualized needs.

What are the strengths of the DRDP?

- The DRDP is aligned with California's learning foundations and educational standards.
- The DRDP includes family support.
- The DRDP incorporates authentic observation, documentation, and reflection.

- The DRDP measures each child's individual level of growth and development in all domains of development.

What are the limitations of the DRDP?

- Training teachers to be objective observers and aware of their biases can be challenging, especially with limited professional development opportunities.
- The tool may be considered rigid.
- Assessment, in general, is time-consuming

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4.6: Partnerships with Families

In addition to strengthening relationships with children, sharing observations with children's families strengthens the home–program connection. Families must be "provided opportunities to increase their child observation skills and to share assessments with staff that will help plan the learning experiences." [47]

Families are with their child in all kinds of places and doing all sorts of activities. Their view of their child is even bigger than the teacher's. How can families and teachers share their observations, their assessment information, with each other? They can share through brief informal conversations, maybe at drop-off or pickup time, or when parents volunteer or visit the classroom. families and teachers also share their observations during longer and more formal times. Home visits and conferences are opportunities to chat a little longer and spend time talking about what the child is learning, what happens at home as well as what happens at school, how much progress the child is making, perhaps to problem solve if the child is struggling and figure out the best ways to support the child's continued learning. [48] Partnering with families will be discussed more in Chapter 8.

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4.7: In Closing

Effectively working with children and families, means that teachers must effectively use observation, documentation, and assessment. We use the cycle of assessment to help improve teaching practices, plan effective curriculum, and assess children's development. Families should be seen as partners in this process. Teachers must ensure that there is effective communication to support these relationships.

Chapter 5 (Developmental Ages and Stages) will build on observation to explore how we use the information gathered to define each unique stage of a child's development.

References

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Developmental Ages and Stages

Learning Objective

- Identify the unique developmental ages and stages of young children and the practices that best meet the developmental needs.

5.1: NAEYC Standards
5.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies
5.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)
5.4: Preview
5.5: The Whole Child – Developmental Domains/Areas
5.10: In Closing
5.6: Developmental Ages and Stages
5.7: Cultural Identity Development
5.8: Developmentally Appropriate Practices
5.9: Behavioral Considerations

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5.1: NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

7. Promoting Child Development and Learning
8. Building Family and Community Relationships
9. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
10. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families
11. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum
12. Becoming a professional

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5.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

Child Development and Learning

Culture, Diversity, and Equity

Dual-Language Development

Family and Community Engagement

Learning Environments and Curriculum

Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation

Professionalism

Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance

Special Needs and Inclusion

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5.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

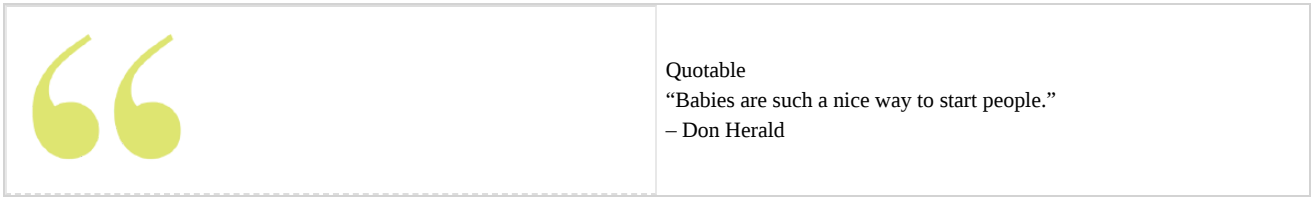
Ideals: 1.1 – 1.4, 1.10, 1.11

Principles 1.1, 1.2, 1.7

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals: 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7

Principles: 2.6



Quotable
“Babies are such a nice way to start people.”
– Don Herald

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5.4: Preview

This chapter examines the child as a whole or what we commonly refer to in Early Childhood Education – “the whole child.” The whole child refers to and addresses all areas or domains of the child – physical, cognitive, language, social-emotional, and spiritual. These domains of development are both collective and individual. Children have similar characteristics at different developmental ages, but they also are individuals with their own – “meness” that is important for us to consider when supporting all children in our early learning programs.

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5.5: The Whole Child – Developmental Domains/Areas

Pause to Reflect

When you think about young children, what images emerge for you? How do you see them? What are some words that you may use to identify them?

When thinking about children, what comes to your mind? Is it the way they engage with you? Is it their sense of adventure? Is it watching them try to climb a ladder? Is it trying to figure out what they may be thinking about when they have a certain look on their faces that they are not yet able to articulate? Is it their obvious curiosity and imagination? This is how we begin to think of the child as a whole, complex being. An integrated, interrelated series of parts that become the "whole."

Figure 5.5.1: Does an image like this come to mind when you think of children? [49]

In the field of Early Childhood Education, we identify these areas of development as domains. These domains (areas) are as follows:

Physical Development

Physical or physical motor development includes their large or gross motor development, their fine motor development, and their perceptual-motor development. The large or gross motor development of children consists of their large motor groups – running, jumping, skipping, swinging with their arms – in other words, the muscle groups that are closer to the body. The fine motor development of children consists of the small motor groups, like writing with their hands, squishing sand in-between their toes – muscle groups that are further away from the body. The last area of physical development is the perceptual-motor – their ability to catch a ball, to use a paintbrush and paint to create something from their memory – in other words, it refers to a child's developing ability to interact with their environment by combining the use of the senses and motor skills.

The first few years of life is dedicated to the heightened development of these skills. In the first year of life, they go from barely being able to hold their head up to walking upright. As many of you taking this course have varied experiences with children, this may be a refresher, but for some of you, this may be new information. It is crucial to the development of children, that they have many opportunities to use their bodies as their body is developing new pathways for success. In an early learning environment serving children from 0 – 5, there should be ample space and materials for children to explore and practice their emerging physical skills. This includes allowing them to take risks with their bodies allowing them to explore the possibilities. These risks afford children opportunities to feel that they are capable as well as gives them a sense of agency.

Figure 5.5.2: What physical motor skills is this child practicing? [50]

Cognitive-Language Development

Cognitive or brain development speaks to how we process information, our curiosity/imagination, long and short-term memory, problem-solving, critical thinking, language both receptive and expressive, beginning reading, computing skills, creativity, etc. In other words, how our brain develops to help us to think about and understand the world around us.

We often place much emphasis on this area of development to the determent of the other areas of development. They all work in concert. When thinking about developing the "whole child" we need to be mindful of providing experiences that promote all of their development, not just their cognitive development.

As with the other areas/domains of development, the first 5 years of life are important in establishing the foundation for learning. This includes providing lots of rich experiences for exploration, curiosity, imagination, use of materials and equipment (that also fosters physical development), opportunities for talking (even with pre-verbal babies), etc. The learning experiences that we provide for children will be discussed in Chapter 6 - Curriculum and Chapter 7 - Learning Environments. Both of those chapters are dedicated to looking at the learning experiences (curriculum) and the environments we set up to support children's whole development.

Social-Emotional Development

Social-emotional development is the relationships that children have with themselves and others, the way they feel about themselves or their self-concept, the way they value themselves or their self-esteem, and he ability to express their feelings to themselves and others.

One of the important dispositions of being an early childhood professional is supporting children's well-being. It is both a moral and ethical responsibility. By nature, children are trusting and look to the adults in their world to provide them with the necessary skills to be successful in their life's journey. We can either elevate or diminish a child.

Figure 5.5.3: What relationship do you think these two children have? [51]

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development, or considering the "spirit" of the child, is something that is a more recent addition to thinking about "whole child" development. In a recent article entitled *Supporting Spiritual Development in the Early Childhood Classroom* by Amelia

Richardson Dress, she cites emerging research that indicates the importance of considering this element of a child. “Spirit is the thing that makes us us. Spirituality is the way we connect our ‘inner us’ to everything else, including other people’s inner ‘usness.” [52] Our spiritual development is a part of our social-emotional development; however, we find it important to call this out specifically to guide our practice of supporting and elevating children’s uniqueness. In Chapter 6 Curriculum, it looks at how to support children’s curiosity. Curriculum that is based on children’s interests, engages their curiosity, is playful, and provides trust, elevates how children see themselves as dynamic, competent human beings. Simply by providing rich, open-ended materials and encouraging their natural desire to ask questions, we support a child’s sense of wonder.

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5.10: In Closing

It is of crucial importance that early childhood professionals have an understanding of the stages children move through at various ages. As our foundation, having this knowledge allows us to more effectively set expectations, plan interactions and curriculum, set up appropriate learning environments, and share information with parents that meets the current needs of the children we work with. Once we understand these general developmental patterns, we are able to move to understanding individual children's interests and abilities within this framework.

As we continue to build upon this chapter, a deep understanding of developmental ages and stages will be the cornerstone for Chapter 6 (Curriculum), Chapter 7 (Environments), and Chapter 8 (Partnering with Families). Referring back to these stages allows us to foster experiences and interactions geared toward children's current abilities and strengths. Through this lens, we are able to see children for what the CAN do rather than what they cannot do YET, helping them move gradually from one stage to the next when they are ready.

References

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5.6: Developmental Ages and Stages

Pause to Reflect

What do you know about the various ages and stages of child development? What interests you in working with children? Do you have a particular age group that brings you more joy? What do you know about that age group?

Identification of the common characteristics of children at various developmental ages has been around for quite some time. Gesell (mentioned in Chapter 2 – Theories of Early Childhood Education) and Ilg conducted research to identify some of these common characteristics of each developmental age. They published a series of books that provide a comprehensive look at those developmental ages. Parents as well as early childhood professionals have found these helpful to understand how to relate to and interact with children as we socialize and educate them in our homes and our schools

Other theories have used these to define how to interact with children, what to expect from children, and how a child's brain develops (Refer back to Chapter 2 Theories of Early Childhood Education). For early childhood professionals, theories help us to set up our curriculum, our environments, our expectations, and build meaningful and engaging relationships with children to support the "whole child."

The following graphics provide an overview of these developmental ages and stages (aka milestones). It is important to note that using these age-level charts require discretion. While they help to define "typical" development, children also are unique in their developmental progress. We use them as guidelines to help inform our practice with young children.

We must always remember:

- The milestones to gain a deeper understanding of the age group as a whole
- That each child, within that developmental age group, is a unique individual
- That children exhibit a range of developmental norms over time
- To resist the tendency to categorize or stereotype children
- To observe each child and assess where they are developmentally
- That each child goes through most of the stages describes, but how they do is the individual nature of who they are
- To focus on what children can do, to build on their strengths, and to find ways to support areas that need to be more developed
- That these milestones refer to typically developing children and are not meant in any way to represent a picture of any "one" child

Note: You may notice that the following charts do not mention spiritual development as one of the domains. There is no specific age nor specific expectations of a child's spiritual development. This development is ongoing as it is supported by the interactions the child has with the world around them.

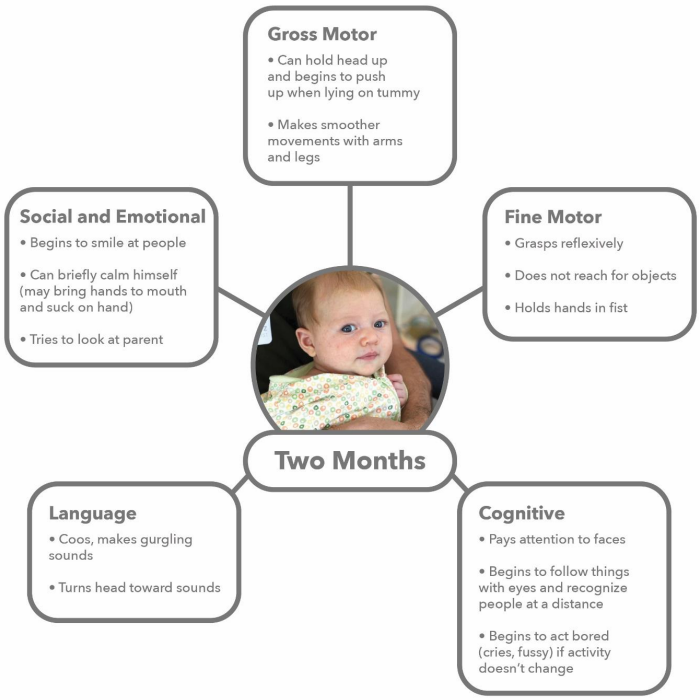

Figure 5.6.1: Developmental milestones typically met around 2 months of age. [53]

Figure 5.6.2: Developmental milestones typically met around 4 months of age. [54]

Figure 5.6.3: Developmental milestones typically met around 6 months of age. [55]

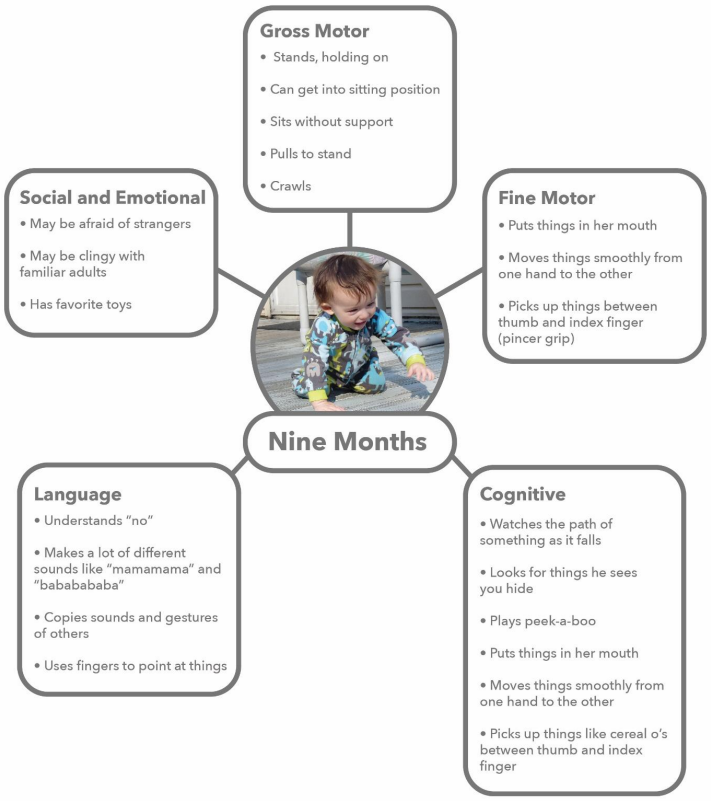

Figure 5.6.4: Developmental milestones typically met around 9 months of age. [56]

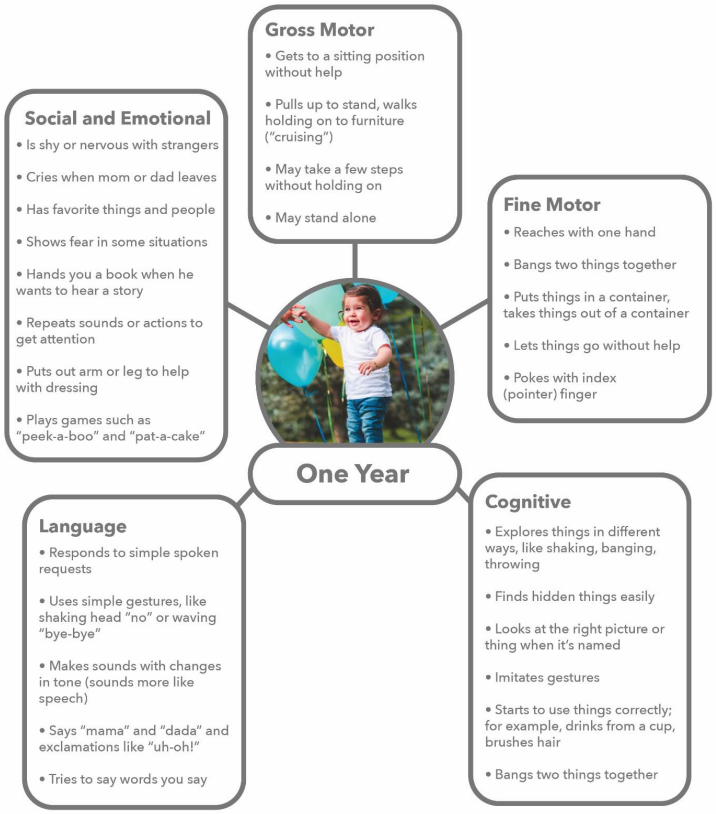

Figure 5.6.5: Developmental milestones typically met around 1 year of age. [57]

Figure 5.6.6: Developmental milestones typically met around 18 months of age. [58]

Figure 5.6.7: Developmental milestones typically met around 2 years of age. [59]

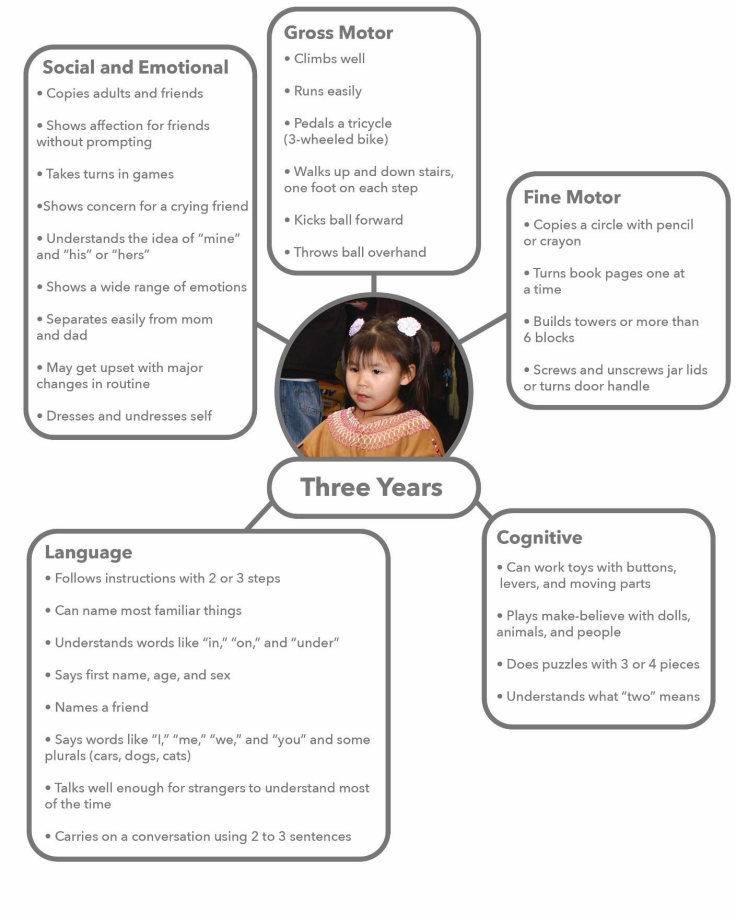

Figure 5.6.8: Developmental milestones typically met around 3 years of age. [60]

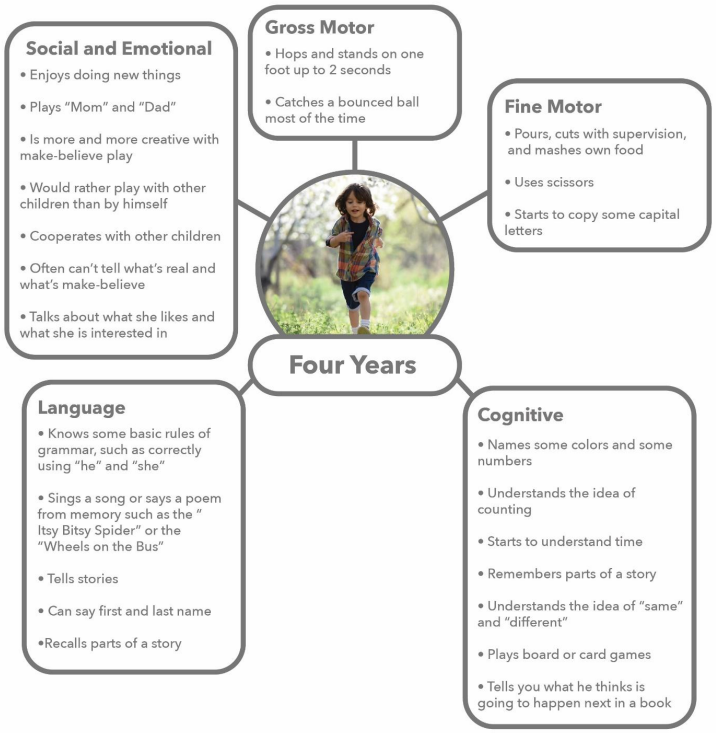

Figure 5.6.9: Developmental milestones typically met around 4 years of age. [61]

Figure 5.6.10: Developmental milestones typically met around 5 years of age. [62]

Figure 5.6.11: Developmental milestones typically met around 6 years of age. [63]

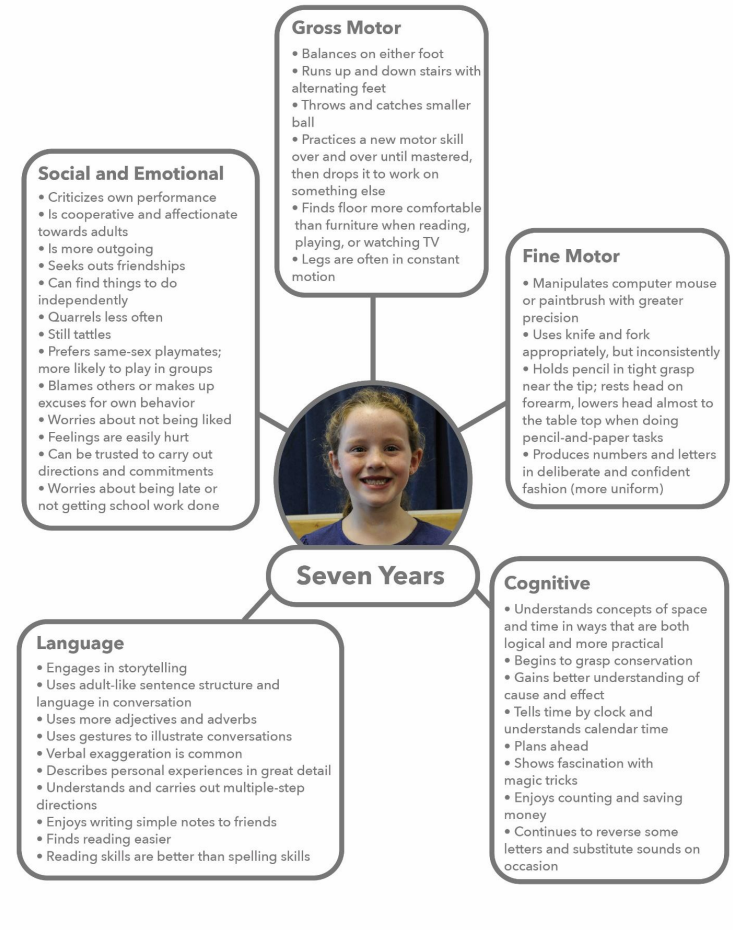

Figure 5.6.12 Developmental milestones typically met around 7 years of age. [64]

Figure 5.6.13: Developmental milestones typically met around 8 years of age. [65]

Pause to Reflect
Has reading over the developmental milestones of different developmental ages changed your ideas about children? What age group may you be most interested in working with? What age group may present more challenges for you?

Developmental Factors by Age

Here is an additional chart to provide more context. While each child develops at their own rate and in their own time and may not match every listed item, here are some general descriptions of children by age:

Table 5.6.1: Factors Influencing Behaviors by Age [66]

Age	General Descriptors
1-2 Years	• Like to explore their environment • Like to open and take things apart • Like to dump things over • Can play alone for short periods of time • Still in the oral stage, may use biting, or hitting to express their feelings or ideas

2-3 Years	• Need to run, climb, push and pull • Are not capable of sharing, waiting, or taking turns • Want to do things on their own • Work well with routine • Like to follow adults around • Prolong bedtime • Say “no” • Understand more than he/she can say
3-4 Years	• Like to run, jump, climb • May grow out of naps • Want approval from adults • Want to be included “me too” • Are curious about everything • May have new fears and anxieties • Have little patience, but can wait their turn • Can take some responsibility • Can clean up after themselves
4-5 Years	• Are very active • Start things but don’t necessarily finish them • Are bossy and boastful • Tell stories, exaggerate • Use “toilet” words in a “silly” way • Have active imaginations
5-6 Years	• Want everything to be fair • Able to understand responsibility • Able to solve problems on their own • Try to negotiate

Quotable

“I remember one morning when I discovered a cocoon in the bark of a tree, just as the butterfly was making a hole in its case and preparing to come out. I waited a while, but it was too long appearing and I was impatient. I bent over it and breathed on it to warm it. I warmed it as quickly as I could and the miracle began to happen before my eyes, faster than life. The case opened, the butterfly started slowly crawling out and I shall never forget my horror when I saw how its wings were folded back and crumpled; the wretched butterfly tried with its whole trembling body to unfold them. Bending over it, I tried to help it with my breath. In vain. It needed to be hatched out patiently and the unfolding of the wings should be a gradual process in the sun. Now it was too late. My breath had forced the butterfly to appear, all crumpled, before its time. It struggled desperately and, a few seconds later, died in the palm of my hand. That little body is, I do believe, the greatest weight I have on my conscience. For I realize today that it is a mortal sin to violate the great laws of nature. We should not hurry, we should not be impatient, but we should confidently obey the eternal rhythm.”
-Nikos Kazantzakis, from Zorba the Greek

Pause to Reflect

How does this quote apply to children's development? How can you as an early childhood professional honor a child's current stage of development and not try to hurry them through? How can you respect each stage as an important milestone needed to experience fully in order to move successfully to the next, gradually when that child is ready? What happens when we try to hurry to introduce concepts to children they are not yet ready for?

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5.7: Cultural Identity Development

Culture can be defined as ideas, knowledge, behaviors, beliefs, art, values, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by particular people or society, and these are passed along from one generation to the next by the way of communication. Our cultural identity is an integrated part of our development.

Cultural identity refers to a person's sense of belonging to a particular culture or group. This process involves learning about and accepting the traditions, heritage, language, religion, ancestry, aesthetics, thinking patterns, and social structures of a culture.

Early Childhood Professionals support the cultural identity of the children and families we serve. We do this by getting to know the child and their family. We stay away from our biases/assumptions about what we think we know about a particular race/ethnicity/religion, etc. and we seek to engage in relationships with families that honor how that family identifies their cultural identity. ECE 106 (The Role of Equity and Diversity in Early Childhood Education) uncovers how we can best serve families with respectful and supportive practices.

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5.8: Developmentally Appropriate Practices

In Chapter 2 – Developmental and Learning Theories, there is a section on Developmentally Appropriate Practices. What is important to note here is that identifying the developmental ages and stages of children helps us to plan curriculum (Chapter 6) and learning environments (Chapter 7) that are appropriate for their developmental age and stage. Below is a refresher from Chapter 2 as it is pertinent in this chapter. Understanding the importance of DAP sets the stage for identifying ways in which to support children in the early childhood learning environment.

There are three important aspects of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP):

1. What is known about child development and learning – referring to knowledge of age-related characteristics that permits general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children's learning and development.
2. What is known about each child as an individual – referring to what practitioners learn about each child that has implications for how best to adapt and be responsive to that individual variation.
3. What is known about the social and cultural contexts in which children live – referring to the values, expectations, and behavioral and linguistic conventions that shape children's lives at home and in their communities that practitioners must strive to understand in order to ensure that learning experiences in the program or school are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for each child and family. [67]

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5.9: Behavioral Considerations

Guiding the behavior of children is another important role that early childhood professionals possess. There are a plethora of programs designed to provide parents and early childhood professionals with the skills and tools that effectively help children navigate their emotions and the behaviors that they may exhibit at different developmental ages. Chapter 6 (Curriculum) has more extensive information on this topic. Below is a chart that provides some ideas about how to approach guidance positively.

Table 5.2 – Positive Approaches for Developmental Factors [68]

Ages/Stages	Developmental Factors	Examples of a Positive Approach to developmental factors to manage behavior
Infant/Toddler	Children this age: • Actively explore environments • Like to take things apart • Have limited verbal ability, so biting or hitting to express feelings is common • Like to dump things over	Children in this stage tend to dump and run, so plan games to enhance this behavior in a positive way. Have large wide-mouth bins for children to practice "dumping items" into and out of. This strategy redirects the behavior of creating a mess into a structured activity to match the development.
Older Toddlers	Children this age: • Need to run, climb, push and pull • Are incapable of sharing; waiting or taking turns • Express beginning independence • Work well with routines • Say "no" often • Comprehend more than they can verbally express	Teachers of this age often find children trying to climb up on tables, chairs, and shelves. Incorporate developmentally climbing equipment and create obstacle courses to redirect activity into positive behaviors. Avoid using the word "no" and create expressions that teach what to do instead of what not to do.
Young Preschool (3-4 years)	Children this age: • Like to be active • Are curious and ask many questions • Express new fears and anxieties • Have little patience • Can clean up after themselves • Can take some responsibility • Seek adult approval	Young preschoolers become curious and create many misconceptions as they create new schemas for understanding concepts. Listen to ideas sensitively address them quickly and honestly. Model exploration and engagement in new activities (especially ones they may be fearful of engaging in)
Older Preschool (4-5 years)	Children this age: • Are highly active • Can be "bossy" • Have an active imagination • Exaggerate stories • Often use "toilet words" in silly ways • Start things but don't always finish	Ask the children to create new silly, but appropriate words to represent emotions rather than focusing on the "bad" words they use.
Young School-Age	Children this age: • Are able to problem solve on their own • Begin to understand responsibility • Think in terms of fairness • Attempt to negotiate	Fairness is a big issue for this group so working with this age group, a teacher should sit with children to develop "rules" and "consequences" so they can take ownership of behavioral expectations

Pause to Reflect
What makes the most sense to you about guiding children's behavior? What seems confusing to you?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Curriculum Basics

Learning Objectives

- Examine curriculum concepts related to planning, implementing, and evaluating interactions and experiences in early childhood settings.
- Identify major components to early childhood curriculum including play based learning, behavioral considerations, and various types of curriculum models.

6.1: NAEYC Standards
6.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies
6.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)
6.4: Preview
6.5: Development and Learning
6.10: Review/Evaluation
6.11: Integrated Curriculum / Themes
6.12: The Behavioral Side of Curriculum
6.13: Types of Programs
6.14: In Closing
6.6: Play: The Vehicle for Development and Learning
6.7: What Children Learn Through Play
6.8: Interactions
6.9: Planning

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6.1: NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

13. Promoting Child Development and Learning
14. Building Family and Community Relationships
15. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
16. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families
17. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum
18. Becoming a professional

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6.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Dual-Language Development
- Family and Community Engagement
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Professionalism
- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance

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6.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: 1.1 – 1.12

Principles: 1.1 – 1.5, 2.7

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals: 2.1 – 2.9

Principles: 2.2, 2.5, 2.6

Section III: Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues (it is broken into two specific responsibilities)

B – Responsibilities to employers

Ideals: 3B.1

Section IV: Ethical Responsibility to Community and Society (we have both an individual and a collective responsibility)

Ideal: 4.1

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6.4: Preview

Pause to Reflect
When you hear the word “curriculum” what comes to mind?

As we have learned in previous chapters, developing relationships, as well as understanding the developmental stages and individual interests and skills of children is crucial to effective teaching. This is accomplished through interactions and both informal and formal observations with the children in our care. This information will form the cornerstone of what is called “curriculum”, which includes both the planned and unplanned experiences that occur throughout the day. While you will devote an entire course to understanding curriculum in ECE 104 (Introduction to Curriculum in Early Childhood), we will visit some of the basic concepts below.

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6.5: Development and Learning

"Development" and "learning" are two integrated concepts that we promote as teachers. As children are "learning" new concepts and skills, they are fostering their "development". Our goal is to encourage the development of the "whole child" (physical, cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual) by providing learning experiences based on children's interests and abilities, a concept known as "**intentional teaching**".

Although children learn in an **integrated** manner (blending all areas of development together) these areas are often broken down for planning purposes. While we looked at this in chapter 5, Developmental Ages and Stages, to understand development, the same is true when planning curriculum.

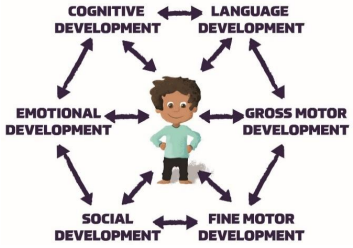

Figure 6.5.1: All areas of development affect and are affected by each other [69]

Table 6.5.1 below shows the relationship between the domains of development and concepts of learning.

Table 6.5.1: Relationship between Development and Learning [70]

Development	Learning
Cognitive	Science, Technology, Math
Language	Language and Literacy
Physical	Health, Safety, Nutrition, Self-Help Skills, Physical Education
Social, Emotional, Spiritual	Social Science, Visual and Performing Arts

	Vignette Javier and Ji are playing in the block area. They have stacked several large blocks on top of each other. Twice the blocks have fallen and each time they have modified their plan slightly to make them stay. Once stable, Ji counts the blocks and Javier turns to the teacher and proudly says, "Look at our 5 story building, you should shop here."
	Pause to Reflect Can you find development and learning for Javier and Ji in each of the categories listed in the table above?

If you are interested in further exploration, the California Learning Foundations that describe competencies and the companion California Preschool Curriculum Framework present strategies for early childhood educators. You can explore each of these:

- California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations (www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/it foundations 2009.pdf)
- California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/docu...mframework.pdf)
- California Preschool Learning Foundations
  - Volume 1 addresses social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfo...sp#psfoundvol1)
  - Volume 2 addresses visual and performing arts, physical development, and health (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfo...sp#psfoundvol2)

- Volume 3 addresses history-social science and science (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfo...sp#psfoundvol3)

- California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks
  - Volume 1 addresses social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfr...sp#psframevol1)
  - Volume 2 addresses visual and performing arts, physical development, and health (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfr...sp#psframevol2)
  - Volume 3 addresses history-social science and science (https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfr...sp#psframevol3)

These will also be visited in more detail in ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum.

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6.10: Review/Evaluation

The third part of the Plan-Do-Review cycle involves reflecting on what was planned and implemented. Remember the section in Chapter 3 (The Early Childhood Teaching Profession), regarding the importance of reflection in all aspects of our teaching? Curriculum planning is one of the primary duties teachers engage in, and as such requires a great deal of reflection and review. Some of this will be done informally as you go about your day. Other times it may be helpful to more formally reflect, in order to capture strengths and areas of growth, both in yourself, the children, and the curriculum that you are planning for them. As a form of "assessment", this feedback proves extremely valuable for teachers and programs. Below are examples of two types of forms teachers might use in their reviews. These will be used in future ECE courses at College of the Canyons.

Curriculum Implementation Evaluation/Reflection

A. Overall impression / comments about your activity (Be specific):
B. What went well?
C. What did not?
D. What type of interactions took place during the implementation of your activity?
(child – child, child – adult, …)
E. How did individual children respond to your implementation? Did they respond the way you anticipated? (Please be specific and use examples whenever possible)
F. If you were to implement this activity again, how would you modify it?
Think about: Encouraging more participation from the children
Meeting the needs of the wide range of developmental levels in the room
Implementing the plan more successfully
Additional activities to enhance the same concept(s) / webbing

Daily Curriculum Reflection

1. I am the proudest of:
2. I wish the following had been done differently:
3. The learning experiences I provided for the children:
4. The interactions, conversations, and approaches I used:
5. The biggest thing I learned about myself is:
6. Learning lessons about my teaching and goals I might set for myself:
7. Learning lessons about ethics and professionalism are:
8. Other

Pause to Reflect
Do these review/reflections make sense to you? What might you add or delete from the blank forms? Why?

Some programs will set up areas of the indoor and outdoor classroom with a variety of materials for children to choose from. Others will set up stations for children to participate in. Chapter 7 The Learning Environment will look specifically at setting up environments. Some portions of the day will include individual, small, and large group experiences. All should be carefully planned with intention and meaning for the children that will be engaging in them.

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6.11: Integrated Curriculum / Themes

It is common for many programs to integrate many aspects of learning with the use of “themes” as a way to weave learning together for children. For some learners, the connection of several learning experiences all related to a common concept can support deeper learning. The most successful themes are those that emerge out of the children’s interest (often called “**emergent curriculum**”). Common themes include:

- My family
- Friendship and caring
- Community Helpers
- Animals
- Activities (camping, …)
- Transportation
- Locations (oceans, mountains, farms,…)

Pause to Reflect
What other themes can you think of?

Often when planning a theme, teachers will use the concept of a curriculum “web” to begin to plan their ideas. Like a list, but in a different format, a web allows teachers to brainstorm related ideas and then to choose the ones that make the most sense to more thoroughly plan for. This process uses both a teacher’s divergent and convergent thinking skills.

A basic web diagram will look like this:

Figure 6.11.1: Basic web diagram

Here is a sample of a curriculum web using this format. Can you think of activities to add?

Figure 6.11.2: Sample curriculum web

Pause to Reflect
What advantages can you find in creating a planning web? How might you incorporate children into helping you web ideas?

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6.12: The Behavioral Side of Curriculum

Rather than thinking of children's behavior as occurring separately from everything else that goes on in the classroom, it can be helpful to recognize that it is a **part of** everything else. As we plan interactions and experiences that are meaningful, we take into account a variety of factors that affect behavior. Part of every plan should be an understanding of who children are and intentionally planning for them. Just as with other skills that children are learning, they are learning to control their bodies, use their words, self-regulate, wait their turn, be patient, and a host of other social and emotional skills the will help them be able to manage themselves in social situations. Learning these life skills is no different from any other concept they will learn by exploring, repeated exposure, and having it make sense to them. As will other concepts, they need teachers who develop relationships with them, focus on what they CAN do, and maintain a positive attitude.

There is no magic approach to helping children learn to manage their behavior and no secret book with all of the answers. Instead, there are a variety of factors to consider and approaches to try to guide behaviors in the ways we prefer. This will be expanded upon in the ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum in Early Childhood Education, so what follows here is an abridged version of considerations as we plan for the children in our programs.

As early childhood professionals, we have an ethical obligation to understand how behavior is affected by the following factors and to plan accordingly. Just as we started Chapter 4 (Observation and Assessment) with looking at the "why", understanding why a child might be behaving in a certain way can assist in planning appropriately:

The "whys" of children's behavior teachers should consider:

- **Development** – what to expect at various ages and stage for the "whole" child
- **Environment** – the physical space, routine and interpersonal tone
- **Family & Cultural Influences** – influences and variations in expectations
- **Temperament** – individual personality styles, approaches, and ways of interpreting events
- **Motivation** – purpose (communicating, relating, attention, control, revenge, inadequacy, fear of failure,…)

Often teachers will use a web like the one previously described to consider the "why" of a behavior. They place the behavior in the center and then web out the various factors to consider.

Figure 6.12.1: Teachers should examine the "why" behind a behavior

Pause to Reflect
How might you use the information above when planning interactions and experiences for children?

Once we have an understanding of the "whys" of behavior, we can plan interactions that foster the behavior we desire. We will introduce you to guidance techniques in the ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum in Early Childhood Education. Here we have highlighted the following Interactive Strategies to consider.

Useful teacher interactions when planning for children's behavior (in addition to the interactive considerations posed earlier):

- Consistency
- Clarity
- Realistic limits and expectations
- Calmness
- Focus on the behavior, not the child
- Focus on what the child can do and is doing appropriately
- Positive direction (for example instead of “don’t run” say “use walking feet”)
- Reflection and logic rather than immediate response and emotion

Some strategies to try include:

- **Ignore** – can be effective if a behavior is annoying rather than dangerous.

  “If you choose to continue using a whining voice I will choose not to listen. As soon as you use your talking voice, I would like to hear what you have to say”

- **Redirect** – directing the child to a more positive way of using that behavior.

  “Inside we use our walking feet, when you go outside you can run” or “We don’t throw things at other people, if you would like to throw let’s find the target and beanbags”

- **Active Listening to understand** – validating what the child is saying.

  “I hear you saying that you want a turn, you sound very sad” or “you worked very hard on that block structure and you are angry it got knocked over”

- **Give Choices** – state what needs to be done and then give 2 options for how it can be done.

  “It’s time to clean up now, will you clean up the paintbrushes or the paints first?” or “It’s time to come inside now, do you want to come in like a mouse or a dinosaur?”

- **Logical Consequences** – as children behave in certain ways (both “positively” and “negatively”) consequences will logically happen.

  “If you talk to your friends in that tone, they may continue not to want to play with you. If you want to play with them, what can you do differently?” or “We are having snack now; if you choose not to eat you will probably be very hungry by lunchtime”

- **Problem Solving/Conflict Resolution** – helping children to solve their own issues with support as needed.

  “What can you do about that?” or “How might you solve that problem” or “it sounds like you both want to play with the same toy, I wonder how you will work that out?”

- **Short removal with reflection and return** – taking a moment to leave a situation to gain composure and return more successfully.

  “It seems to be hard for you to keep the sand in the sandbox right now. I’m going to ask you to leave the sandbox for a few moments and think about how you can be respectful to the others that are sharing this space with you. Where will you go to think?”)A very brief time later) “what can you do differently next time you enter the sandbox? Great, would you like to try out your solution? Come on back and show me”. “You did it!” [79]

Pause to Reflect
How might you use the information above when planning interactions and experiences for children? What makes sense? What feels comfortable to try?

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6.13: Types of Programs

Many high quality programs using the tenants of Developmentally Appropriate Practices exist today. Most have integrated this information into an eclectic format, providing active learning, quality interactions and environments, and activities based on their observations of children's interests and abilities. They included families as partners and extend to value the communities and cultures of which they are a part. Below is a list of program and curriculum names that encompass the above tenants. They are all similar at their core, but if you would like to research them further you may find some unique components of interest to you. They are listed alphabetically for convenience:

- **Culturally Appropriate Curriculum** – curriculum that helps children understand how they are similar to, yet different than each other based on individual histories, families, and culture.
- **Emergent Curriculum** – curriculum planning based on teacher observations of children's interests. Usually, a spontaneous approach where experiences evolve and change as the process unfolds.
- **Faith Based** – programs that include the teaching of the religious beliefs of the sponsoring organization.
- **Family Child Care** – a program that takes place in a home setting.
- **Head Start** – A comprehensive program, that provides learning programs; nutrition; medical, dental, and mental health care, and parent education and vocational training.
- **High-Scope** – named for a program High in Quality, Broad in Scope, this curriculum emphasizes active learning and higher-level thinking. It includes a Plan-Do-Review cycle where children learn to make plans, carry them out, and then evaluate those plans; important life-skills.
- **Inclusion** – programs designed to include children with a wide variety of abilities and needs.
- **Inclusive Curriculum** – the aspect of a program that reflect sensitivity to culture, home language, gender, religion, and abilities.
- **Intergenerational Programs** – programs designed for both young children and the elderly, where the two populations interact throughout the day in similar activities.
- **Laboratory Schools** – early childhood programs taking place on college campuses, usually with a supervised training component for college students learning to work with young children.
- **Looping** – the practice of keeping a group of children and their teacher together for more than one year.
- **Montessori** – True Montessori schools are based on the works of Maria Montessori including self-correcting materials, independent learning experiences, and an emphasis on life skills. Because her name was not trademarked, many programs that have Montessori in the title do not meet all of the criteria of a true Montessori program, which can be very confusing indeed.
- **Mixed Age Grouping** – also called "family grouping"' placing children of different ages in the same classroom.
- **Outdoor Classroom** – outdoor spaces created to enhance the quantity, quality and benefit of outdoor experiences. Often brings the inside classroom outside, incorporating interest centers and materials usually found indoors.
- **Parent Cooperative (Co-op)** – a program designed and run by a group of parents for their young children. Parents will usually hire a teacher to facilitate learning and perform all other duties themselves. More recently called "Learning Pods".
- **Play based** – focuses on the value of play in fostering development in young children, planning interactions and experiences focused on the many types of play.
- **Reggio-Emilia** – this approach is a student-centered and constructive self-guided curriculum that uses self-directed, experiential learning in relationship-driven environments, often through a "project approach".
- **RIE (Resources for Infant Educarers)** – based on Magda Gerber's work with babies, emphasizes the unique stage of infants and toddlers. Curriculum for this age is caring for them, with the belief that caring educates infants about themselves. [80]

Pause to Reflect
Which of the programs just mentioned spark your interest? Why?

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6.14: In Closing

As can be seen, there is much to consider when planning, implementing, and evaluating curriculum for early childhood programs. At the core of quality curriculum is the notion of Developmentally Appropriate Practices, including observing and understanding the individual children in your care, developing and maintaining positive relationships and interactions, effectively communicating, valuing the role of play in learning, and understanding that children's behavior is a part of the learning process.

In Chapter 7 (Learning Environments), we will explore how the environment sets the stage for children and families to feel engaged and supported in their early learning classroom.

Pause to Reflect
Thinking back over the chapter, what are 3 main concepts that stand out for you? Why? How will you use them?

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6.6: Play: The Vehicle for Development and Learning

Since in previous chapters we have explored the notion that children learn through “play”, let’s expand on that concept a bit as it relates to curriculum.

Figure 6.6.1: Play [71]

Children are born observers and are active participants in their own learning and understanding of the world around them from the very beginning of their existence. This means they are not just recipients of a teacher’s knowledge. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) challenges early childhood professionals to be intentional in their interactions and environments to create optimal experiences to maximize children’s growth and development. Under this umbrella of DAP, knowledge is based upon discovery and discovery occurs through active learning and abundant opportunities for exploration. Through a “hands-on” approach and using play as a vehicle, children will develop the skills necessary for growth and development and maximize their learning.

Teachers play a pivotal role in children’s active construction of knowledge. They intentionally provide the environments, interactions, and experiences that support children in actively building concepts, skills, and overall development. The role of the teacher who works with young children in early childhood is to support children’s active construction of knowledge. In a sense, early childhood teachers serve as research supports as the children sense, discover, and construct meaning about the world around them.

Early childhood teachers are responsible for:

- offering children well-stocked play spaces where they can construct concepts and ideas, preferably in the company of peers
- designing daily routines that invite children to be active participants and to use emerging skills and concepts
- supporting children’s learning through interactions and conversations that prompt using language and ideas in new ways

Things to Remember About How Children Development Learn

- Actively exploring, experimenting, gathering data, making sense of it
- Exploration is a continual process that takes time and repetition
- Begins with concrete, “real life” experiences before abstract concepts
- Takes place in a social context
- Encompasses a broad range of developmental domains
- Development typically occurs in a sequence or continuum
- There are many Individual differences to consider

- Interests
- Abilities
- Learning styles
- Temperaments
- Family and Cultural Experiences
- Communities

As we think about play, it is important to remember that there are different **types of play** that children engage in. Chapter 2 (Developmental & Learning Theories) introduced you to a list of 12 different types (also included in the appendix for easy reference). Quality teachers incorporate plans for each of these types of play throughout the day. They set up activities and plan experiences that will allow children to make sense of their world through each of these play modalities. While teachers keep all 12 in mind, they often combine some of them to narrow down the areas and experiences they provide and chapter 7 (Learning Environments) will look at this in more detail. A common framework used by teachers as they define areas and activities is as follows:

- **Socio-Dramatic Play**: Acting out experiences and taking on roles they are familiar with. Often incorporates Symbolic Play where children use materials and actions to represent something else.
- **Creative Play**: Trying out new ideas and using imagination, with a focus on the process rather than the product.
- **Exploratory Play**: Using senses to explore and discover the properties and function of things.
- **Constructive Play**: Using materials to build, construct, and create.
- **Loco-motor Play**: Moving for movement's sake, just because it is fun. [72]

Figure 6.6.2: Constructive Play

Figure 6.6.3: Creative Play

Figure 6.6.4: Exploratory Play

Figure 6.6.5: Socio-Dramatic Play

Figure 6.6.6: Locomotor Play

Pause to Reflect
Going back to Table 6.1, which concepts are being developed by which types of play? By incorporating each of these types of play, are you developing the "whole child"? Why or why not?

As with most things, the way that children play will go through developmental stages. As teachers plan, they keep in mind the stages of play relevant to the children they are planning for. Originally described by Parten (1932), this list, explains how children's play changes by age as they grow and develop social skills.

- **Unoccupied Play (Birth-3 Months)**: At this stage, a baby is making many movements with their arms, legs, hands, feet, etc. They are learning about and discovering how their body moves.
- **Solitary Play (Birth-2 Years)**: This is the stage when a child plays alone. They are not interested in playing with others quite yet.
- **Spectator/Onlooker Behavior (2 Years)**: During this stage, a child begins to watch other children playing but does not play with them.
- **Parallel Play (2+Years)**: When a child plays alongside or near others but does not play with them.
- **Associate Play (3-4 Years)**: When a child starts to interact with others during play, but there is not a large amount of interaction at this stage.
- **Cooperative Play (4+ years)**: When a child plays together with others and has interest in both the activity and other children involved in playing. [73]

Pause to Reflect
Why might these stages be important to consider? How would you use this information in your planning?

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6.7: What Children Learn Through Play

Just like the “whole child” is often broken down into developmental domains for studying, so too is learning. Many aspects of learning occur simultaneously; it is integrated and connected. To define learning we often break it into categories. Because the connection between play and learning is so important, the way it is broken down exists in many forms, including assessments, planning resources, and the frameworks and foundations mentioned above. Figure 6.8 is a compilation of such skills, compiled by Eyrich (2016) tying development into learning.

Figure 6.7.1: What Children Learn Through Play [74]

Domain	How it is tied to learning

Physical	• Personal care (hygiene, feeding, dressing,)
	• Nutrition
	• Safety
	• Motor (Movement) Skills
	  ◦ Active physical play
	  ◦ Perceptual-motor (senses, effort, direction,)
	  ◦ Gross (large) motor (running, throwing, …)
	  ◦ Fine (small) motor (hands, fingers, feet, toes)

Cognitive	• Cognitive approaches to learning and self-regulation
	  ◦ Maintain attention
	  ◦ Self-comfort
	  ◦ Curiosity and initiative
	  ◦ Self-control of feelings and behavior
	  ◦ Engagement and persistence
	• Skills of inquiry
	  ◦ Observe, investigate, document, communicate
	• Knowledge of the natural/physical world
	  ◦ Understanding properties and events
	• Cause and effect
	  ◦ Understanding relationship between cause/effect
	• Classification
	  ◦ Learning the attributes of objects by exploring
	  ◦ Compare, match, sort, categorize
	  ◦ Finding similarities and differences
	  ◦ Symbol
	• Number
	  ◦ Understanding quantity (amount, degree)
	  ◦ Assigning a numerical symbol to quantity
	  ◦ Counting
	• Measurement
	  ◦ Awareness of difference in properties
	  ◦ (size, length, weight, capacity, volume)
	  ◦ Seriation (order 3 or more by comparison)
	  ◦ (small/medium/large, loud/louder/loudest)
	  ◦ Time (sequence of events, rhythm, yesterday/ tomorrow)
	• Patterning
	  ◦ Recognize, reproduce, repeating sequences
	• Spatial relationships Experiences an object’s position in relation to others

Language	• Symbol/symbolic reasoning
	  ◦ Sounds and letters are put together to represent things
	• Receptive language
	  ◦ Listening, understanding, responding
	• Expressive language
	  ◦ Speaking, communicating, conversation
	• Graphic (written) language/literacy
	  ◦ Interest in print & books, phonology, pre-reading, reading
	  ◦ Symbol, letter, print knowledge, pre-writing, writing

Social	• Skills learning with adults
	  ◦ Can stay at school without parent
	  ◦ Can respond/enjoy adults other than parents
	  ◦ Adults will help in times of need
	  ◦ Adult will not always solve problems
	• Skills learned with peers
	  ◦ Different approaches work for different peers
	  ◦ Cooperation and turn taking
	  ◦ Lead and follow
	  ◦ Sustain relationships and helping peers
	  ◦ Share materials, equipment, people, ideas
	  ◦ Asserting rights and self defense
	  ◦ Negotiating skills and solving conflicts
	  ◦ Anticipate and avoid problems
	  ◦ Realistic expectations and valuing differences
	• Skills learning in a group
	  ◦ Respect
	  ◦ Responsibility
	  ◦ Compassion
	  ◦ Tolerance
	  ◦ Group identity
	  ◦ Follow and adapt to routines and expectations
	  ◦ How to enter and exit situations
	  ◦ Deal with delay of gratification (patience)
	• Skills learned as an individual
	  ◦ Self-help and self-care
	  ◦ Make choices and initiate own activities
	  ◦ Cope with rejection, hurt feelings, disappointment
	  ◦ Take responsibility

Emotional	• Ability to deal with feelings
	  ◦ Notice, label, and accept feelings
	  ◦ Express feelings in appropriate ways
	  ◦ Deal with feelings of others
	  ◦ Resolve inner fears, conflicts
	• Ability to exercise judgment
	  ◦ Notice, label, and make choices
	  ◦ Think through consequences
	  ◦ Evaluate effectiveness of choices
	  ◦ Learn to take another viewpoint
	• Enjoying one's self and one's power
	  ◦ Acquire a sense of self
	  ◦ Develop self-confidence and self-esteem
	  ◦ Build trust in self and others
	  ◦ Reveal own personality
	  ◦ Learn to take risks & learn from mistakes
	  ◦ Become competent in several areas

Creative	• Flexibility (shifting from 1 idea to another) • Fluency (producing many ideas) • Sensitivity (awareness (moods, textures, senses,) • Imagination / Originality • Risk Taking / Elaboration (pushing boundaries) • Self as a resource (awareness, confidence in ability) • Experience (to build mastery to build upon) • Visual and Performing Arts

Pause to Reflect
Go back to the vignette with Javier and Ji. Looking at Figure 6.8, can you find learning that took place in all 6 of the domains? How might you use this list in your planning and communicating with families about "playing to learn"?

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6.8: Interactions

Figure 6.8.1: Teachers will interact with groups of children [75]

Figure 6.8.2: And teachers will interact with children one-on-one [76]

It cannot be repeated enough that human beings are social creatures that thrive on relationships. In order to maximize a child's interests, willingness to take risks, try again when initial attempts have not gone as planned, and learn to their fullest, we must establish and maintain relationships with children that foster trust and encourage autonomy and initiative.

Interactions should be as much of what we plan for as the materials and experiences themselves. Built into every curriculum plan should be thoughts about how the teacher will:

- Create a sense of safety and trust
- Acknowledge children's autonomy
- Foster a growth mindset
- Extend learning through open-ended statements and conversations

Reflect back on Chapter 3 - The Teacher's Role and the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships to foster brain development. The concept of a "Neuro-Relational approach" will be present in the curriculum that we plan for young children.

Quality interactions will include:

- Valuing each child for who they are
- Finding something special and positive about each child
- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Finding time each day to interact and make a connection with every child
- Respecting children's opinions and ideas
- Being present for children
- Reflecting back what they say and do
- Listening to listen hear rather than respond
- Creating a warm and welcoming environment
- Being consistent as a means of establishing trust
- Focusing on the process
- Focusing on what children CAN do rather than what they can't do YET
- Including families as valuable team members (for more information refer to Chapter 8 – Relating to Families)
- Understanding and respecting each child's individual and group culture

Pause to Reflect
Do these make sense to you? Are there others? Which will be easiest for you? Most difficult? Why?

Communication goes hand in hand with interaction. Being aware of what we are saying and how we are saying it is crucial in establishing and maintaining relationships. Positive communication includes:

Nonverbal:

- Get down to children's level
- Observe
- Be present
- Listen
- Understand
- Use positive facial expressions
- Look interested
- Smile

Verbal:

- Be aware of the tone and volume of your voice
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use facial expressions and body movements that match your words
- Give choices and share control
- Focus on the positive
- Describe what you are doing as children are watching
- Model appropriate language
- Reflect back what children are saying
- Have conversations with multiple exchanges
- Consider close vs. open-ended questions and statements

The type of questions you ask will elicit different responses. Sometimes we want a direct answer while most of the time we want to generate deeper thinking to promote learning. Consider each of the questions below regarding the color blue:

- "Are you wearing blue today"?
- "What color are your pants"?
- "Tell me all the things you see that are blue"

Each will point out that the child's pants are blue, but in very different ways.

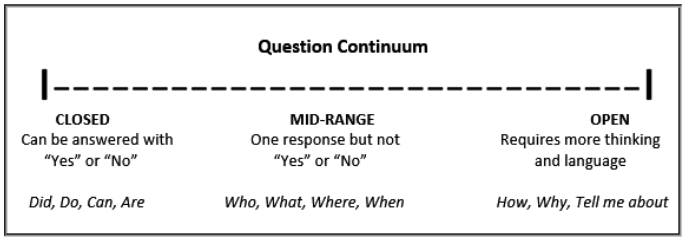


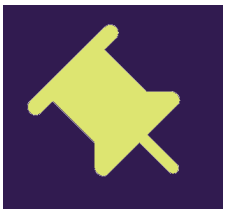
Figure 6.8.3: The question continuum [77]

Considering what **type of thinking** we want to promote enables us to create questions and statements that spark that knowledge. Thinking is often broken down into two types:

- **Convergent thinking** – emphasizes coming up with one correct response; "converging" on the "right" answer.
- **Divergent thinking** – emphasized generating multiple responses, brainstorming and "thinking outside the box"; "diverging" into different ways of thinking and answering.

Both can be valuable as children develop and learn. Often starting with divergent questions and then following up with convergent questions allows for broad thinking that can then be narrowed down.

Pause to Reflect
How might you use these communication strategies in your planning, implementing, and reviewing/assessing curriculum for children?



Vignette

Teacher Odom sets up a play dough table with ingredients to make dough and materials to use after it is made. He lets the children know that he will be there if anyone wants to join him. Three children hurry over and he greets each of them and says, “I’m so happy you decided to join. Let’s get started”. He shows them the recipe and encourages them to decide how to proceed. They take turns adding the ingredients and he shows patience and interest as they take the lead, asking open-ended questions along the way, “What will we do next?” “What do you think will happen?” and facilitating conversations. He points out each of their contributions along the way and focuses on the processes they are using rather than the finished product. He encourages them to interact with each other, “Wow, look at how B did that” and “Isn’t it interesting how you both added flour but you did it so differently”. Other children come to join and he encourages the original three to find ways to include them. When the dough is complete, the children use a variety of rolling pins, cookie cutters, and dull plastic knives to play with it. He continues expressing his interest, by commenting on how each child is using the materials and asks open-ended questions to foster deeper learning.

Pause to Reflect

What are some ways the teacher fostered interactions with children to enhance their trust, encourage their autonomy and initiative, and foster thinking and learning?

Pause to Reflect

Going back to Table 6.1 on Development and Learning, can you find skills from each of the categories that the children would be enhancing? How do interactions help foster these skills?

In Chapter 4 (Observation and Assessment) we discussed the importance of using our observational skills to get to know the individual children we are planning for. We introduced the Cycle of Reflection, which begins with observing, documenting, and interpreting so that you can plan, implement and evaluate appropriate interactions and experiences that make sense and meet the needs of the particular children we are working with. Below we will take a deeper look at the ways we use our observational data and interpretations.

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6.9: Planning

As with most endeavors, we are more effective when we plan curriculum ahead of time. This helps us to be prepared and to adjust our ideas to be flexible as the children engage with what we have planned.

Reasons to plan:

- Make sure our plans meet the needs, interests, and abilities of the children
- Make sure we understand the learning and development that will occur
- Make sure we have all the materials we will need
- Make sure we know where in the environment to set up
- Make sure we know how to set up
- Make sure we know how to encourage children to participate
- Make sure we have thought through behavioral issues that might arise and how to handle them
- Make sure we have thought through the interactions that will take place
- Make sure we know how we will encourage the children to clean up
- Make sure we know how we might gather observational notes
- Make sure we have thought through how we might document and share this experience with parents or others.

Pause to Reflect
Do these make sense to you? Are there others?

If we have planned thoroughly and thoughtfully, it allows us to implement our plans and to reflect on them afterward, using that information for future planning.

Often referred to as the Plan - Do (implement) - Review (evaluate) cycle, this type of approach allows us to continuously provide the most effective curriculum to the young children in our care.

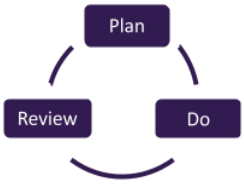

Figure 6.9.1: Plan Do Review Cycle

Chapter 7 (Learning Environments), will discuss early childhood daily routines in more detail. For now, let us consider that most programs are broken down into segments of the day, beginning with the arrival of the children and ending with their departure. Teachers will plan for all segments of the day, both inside and outside, which might include:

- Arrival and Departure
- Small group time
- Large group time
- Centers
- Child initiated play
- Nutrition (snack, lunch,…)
- Self-help (washing hands, toileting, napping,…)
- Transitions between all segments of the day
- Others as each program dictates

One of the best planning strategies is to use a written format. Sometimes we plan one activity or experience on a single form. Other times we plan for multiple experiences on the same form. New teachers are often encouraged to plan each activity separately at first until they feel comfortable with the process.

Reasons for a written plan:

- Keeps things in order
- Assures everything is thought through and not forgotten
- Can be referred to as needed throughout the process
- Can be shared with others
- Documents planning for record-keeping purposes
- Can be saved to be repeated or modified without having to start from scratch

When planning it can be helpful to know that certain terms are used in a variety of ways by various programs. Because this chapter is written for a diverse group of future early childhood educators, we will use these terms interchangeably so that you are ready for the vocabulary used wherever you may work.

Some of the terms most frequently used to represent the "goings-on" you will plan for are:

- Lesson
- Activity
- Learning Experience
- Curriculum
- Teaching Moment

While they may have slightly different "official" meanings, they overlap in our field and can all be found to begin with a **plan** based on children's interests and needs, **implemented** according to the plan (with modifications as they occur), and **reviewed/evaluated** afterward through reflection to assess and build upon for the future.

Below are examples of generic planning forms (used later in other ECE courses at College of the Canyons). You will see planning for a specific activity and planning for the entire day. For each there will is a blank version and a sample version. The programs you work in will each have their own unique method and planning forms, but most will include some, if not all, of the information included here.

Blank Example Planning Form for Specific Activity

CURRICULUM / ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Title / Description:

Resources (Where did you learn about this activity) :

Reason(s) for Curriculum Plan (justify by considering developmental milestones, learning domains, observations in your assigned children's classroom, and your knowledge of child development, milestones, word picture handout & DAP that guided your decision to implement this particular activity)

Ages of Children: **Number of Children**:

Location:

Segment of Daily Routine:

Materials Needed (be specific-quantities, color, book and song titles, etc.)

Implementation / Directions (List step-by-step as if the implementation could be replicated without you; include set up and clean up, involving children whenever possible. Step-by-step description of learning activities with specific detail.) Describe step-by-step what the children will be doing.

Now describe your role. Your guidance supports a maximum learning environment. Flexibility and supporting the child's process is vital. Questions to ask yourself: How will you introduce the activity? How will you engage the children? What will you be doing/saying? What is your role during the activity ? What open-ended questions will you be using? Please include a minimum of 3 open-ended questions for your activity.

Specific ways this activity will facilitate development:
Physical:
a)
b)
Cognitive:
a)
b)
Language:
a)
b)
Social/Emotional:
a)
b)
Creative:
a)
b)
Behavioral Considerations (Plan ahead…what issues might arise/what strategies might help) :
a)
b)
c)

Documentation How will you collect and display the development listed above? (documentation board, classroom book, PowerPoint, Prezi, creative ideas, etc.):

Webbing Ideas (List at least 5 activities to extend the learning into other areas; try to include one appropriate use of technology):

Modifications to include ALL children (developmental delays, disabilities, cultural and linguistic diversities, etc.):
a)
b)
c)

Inclusion of Parents/Families:

Other Notes/Considerations:

Sample Planning Form for Specific Activity

CURRICULUM / ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Developed by: Suzie Student

Title/Description: Nature Scavenger Hung
Resources *(Where did you learn about this activity)*
Mr.Bossman, my mentor teacher implemented this activity with his class. Book Resource: Nature Fun Curriculum Guide , by I.B. Squirrly, Acorn Press, 2019
Reason(s) for Curriculum Plan *(justify by considering developmental milestones, learning domains, observations in your assigned children's classroom, and your knowledge of child development, milestones, word picture handout & DAP that guided your decision to implement this particular activity)*
As the season is changing, several children have commented on observations they are making in nature (leaves are falling, colors are changing, weather,…). They have been showing a lot of interest in books related to nature. They are also bringing in items they are finding on the ground in their homes or community (pinecones, sticks, leaves…)

Ages of Children: 4 **Number of Children**: 20 (entire class)
Location: outside on the yard
Segment of Daily Routine: outside time
Materials Needed *(be specific-quantities, color, book and song titles, etc.) (**NAEYC Standard 1c**)*:

- list of items (pics & words)
- items on list
- pen and paper for recording responses
- nature chart or book for researching items
- bags to put items in if requested

Implementation / Directions *(List step-by-step as if the implementation could be replicated without you; include set up and clean up, involving children whenever possible. Step-by-step description of learning activities with specific detail.) Describe step-by-step what the children will be doing.*
Begin by welcoming the group and letting them know how happy we are they have joined us. Invite children to assist in finding some objects. Divide children into small groups and give each group 1 scavenger hunt list. Encourage the children to find the objects on the list. Remind children of the behavioral expectations for the activity.
Now describe your role. Your guidance supports a maximum learning environment. Flexibility and supporting the child's process is vital. Questions to ask yourself: How will you introduce the activity? How will you engage the children? What will you be doing/saying? What is your role during the activity ? What open-ended questions will you be using? Please include a minimum of 3 open-ended questions for your activity.
Encourage children to explore colors, shapes, textures, sizes,…. Encourage children to discuss among themselves how items are the same and how they are different and why they fit into a chosen category. As children engage in the activity, write down their statements for future documentation. Use open-ended questions to stimulate discussion and reflect children's statements and ideas to other children. For clean up encourage each group to but their collections inside for a future art activity.
Specific ways this activity will facilitate development: *(NAEYC Standard 5a)*
Physical:
a) fine motor as they pick up objects
b) gross motor as they bend, reach, walk,…
Cognitive:
a) classification as they sort by size, texture, color,…
b) number as they count their items
Language:
a) listening (receptive) as they listen to each other
b) talking (expressive) as they discuss their items with each other
Social/Emotional:
a) group skills such as taking turns, waiting, listening to others
b) sense of accomplishment as they find items and solve problems that arise
Creative:
a) flexibility and fluency as they stretch thinking and shift from one idea to another
b) using self as a resource as they tap into themselves to find objects and define them
Behavioral Considerations *(Plan ahead…what issues might arise/what strategies might help)*
a) not wanting to participate – observation is a form of participation so if they would rather do something else and just watch, that is fine. If we make it fun, enough they will want to join in.
b) frustration about not finding item – when setting up, go through the list and make sure that all items are available and visible. If not, place items there. This should accommodate the issue, but it is also all right for children to be frustrated and work through it, so if it happens I would encourage them to breathe, tell me why they are frustrated, and then problem-solve ways to feel better.
c) children not sharing or participating as a group – be prepared to help facilitate group interactions and the "give and take" of relationships. All children should have opportunities to lead and to follow .
Documentation *How will you collect and display the development listed above? (documentation board, classroom book, PowerPoint, Prezi, creative ideas, etc.)*
Using the pen and paper (and photos if possible), I will write down what children said and did. I will place clipboard with those notes on the parent board, along with the following:
Today we went on a Nature Scavenger Hunt on the yard. Several children had been expressing an interest in the changes they are noticing in nature so we built upon this interest. As they explored they developed the following skills:
Physical:
a) fine motor as they pick up objects

b) gross motor as they bend, reach, walk,…
Cognitive:
a) classification as they sort by size, texture, color,…
b) number as they count their items
Language:
a) listening (receptive) as they listen to each other
b) talking (expressive) as they discuss their items with each other
Social/Emotional:
a) group skills such as taking turns, waiting, listening to others
b) sense of accomplishment as they find items and solve problems that may arise
Creative:
a) flexibility and fluency as they stretch thinking and shift from one idea to another
b) using self as a resource as they tap into themselves to find objects and define them
Here are some of the things they said and did. Be sure to ask your child about it and expand at home if you have the opportunity! We can't wait to hear what you come up with!

Webbing Ideas *(List at least 5 activities to extend the learning into other areas; try to include one appropriate use of technology)* ***(NAEYC Standard 5a)***

1. Reading books on nature
2. Art / Painting with leaves and/or a nature collage
3. Cognitive / Additional sorting, classifying, graphing, nature lotto, etc.
4. Dramatic Play / Magnifying glasses, tree branches, nature collection bags (inside and / or outside)
5. Group Time/ Related songs, stories, movement activities
6. Snack Time / Sorting and classifying Trail Mix

Modifications to include ALL children *(developmental delays, disabilities, cultural and linguistic diversities, etc.)* ***(NAEYC Standard 4b, 4d & 5c)***

a) have plastic gloves for children who may not like to sensory experiences of touching objects
b) create the list in English as well as the other languages used in the classroom
c) have pictures for each listed item for children who cannot yet read or who have a hearing impairment.

Inclusion of Parents/Families

1. Encourage parents to join us on the walk (help them understand how to facilitate the children's exploration rather than finding and gathering the items themselves)
2. Encourage parents who know a language other than English to include that language on the list
3. Using the documentation, encourage families to extend the hunt to their homes and share what they did

Other Notes / Considerations:

- Consider the weather, as an alternative, set up inside or wait
- Extend the activity with a nature collage activity later in the day on a large piece of contact paper that can be added to over the next few days.

Blank Example Daily Planning Form

Daily Lesson Plan

Date:		Class:			
Segment / Time	Activity with Brief Description	Materials & Considerations	Purpose / Learning / Development	Intentional Interactions & Conversations	Notes / Other

Add additional rows as needed

Sample Daily Planning Form

Daily Lesson Plan

Date:			Class:		
Segment / Time	Activity with Brief	Materials & Considerations	Purpose / Learning /	Intentional Interactions	Notes / Other

	Description		Development	& Conversations	
ARRIVAL 9:00 am	-Greet parents and children -Health check	-Familiarity with families	-Positive start to day -Smooth transition from home to school -Connecting with families -Sense of belonging -Basic health check	-Get down to children's level -Watch non-verbal language -Be present -"welcome", "So glad to see you", "You look…"	-Check with teacher to see how parents should be addressed
GREETING CIRCLE 9:10 am	-Sing good morning song -Discuss activities for the day	-CD -CD Player – cue up song ahead of time & check it is working -Carpet squares for children to sit on, placed in semi-circle as they arrive -samples or pictures of activities _be sure to know activities ahead of time	-Listening and speaking skills -Social skills (waiting, learning about peers,…) -Spatial relations (staying on carpet) -Problem solving (making choices)	-Be sure each child can see -Sit at their level -Give children time to respond -Validate each child's comments -Notice positive behavior -Encourage children to correct inaccurate words or tunes	-Discuss behavior strategies with teacher prior -Know activities -Know words to song
CENTERS 9:20 -10:15	ART: Bingo marker painting SCIENCE: Ooblick	ART: colored bingo markers, large coffee filters…place on table and encourage children to create SCIENCE: mix cornstarch and water in tub. Encourage children to wash their hands and then join in exploration. Add spoons, small rocks, and food color to mixture as desired.	-Foster creativity -Sense of self -Curiosity & problem solving -Fine motor skills -Social skills -Spatial relations (on, in, …)	-Allow children to do their own work -"tell me about", "you are working really hard on that" -Refer children to other children -"How does that feel?" -"What are some ideas?" "How could you solve that?"	Keep in mind E's sensory issues and provide rubber gloves or place materials in baggie if needed.

				"Interesting"	
CLEAN UP 10:15	Transition warning and cleaning up classroom	Transition warning: 5 minutes until clean up time, 2 minutes until clean up time Finish up what you are doing Sing clean up song	-Self help skills -Fine & gross motor -Cognitive – time, matching, spatial, -Sense of pride -Sense of collaboration & community	"What will you clean up first" "Do you want to put away this or this" "You do one and then I will do one" "When we are done we can have snack	-Be sure to watch clock -Speak loudly -Follow through -Discuss strategies with teacher prior
SNACK 10:20	-Wash hands and sit at table -Fruit Kabobs	-Place "skewers" (skinny straws) and fruit on table on platters -Encourage children to make kabobs and then eat them	-Health & nutrition -Fine motor skills -Language skills (listen and discuss) -Cognitive (categorize, label,…)	-Sit with children -Informally extend discussions on fruit, colors, textures,…	-Check for allergies
OUTSIDE 10: 40 – 11:30	-After snack transition outside -OBSTACLE COURSE -STORY STATION -at end transition inside	Encourage children to participate if desired (if not, regular yard set up is available): OBSTACLE COURSE: Balls, bean bags, targets, rope balance beam, chalk drawn path, hula hoop STORY STATION: Books spread out on blanket under tree	- Gross motor skills - Fine motor skills -Eye hand coordination -Balance -Literacy -Social with peers and adults	-Encourage collaboration -Can you do it together" "Who would you like to do it with" -Sharing – "how will you decide who will have it first?' -"You tried hard" -"Let's do it together" -"Are there other ways to do it?' -"How should we put them away?"	-Be sure teacher is outside at all times. -Encourage children to use restroom before going out -Have plan for obstacle course but be flexible based on children's interests -Create cozy area for stories -Clean up transition at 11:30
CIRCLE	-Sit on	-Encourage children to sit on carpet	-Literacy	-Make sure	-As teacher or

11:40	carpet squares -CLASS BOOK - 3 BEARS RAP - FAREWELL SONG	-CLASS BOOK: Adult starts “once upon a time” and then each child adds a sentence. Record on phone or chart paper and then transcribe later and add to book area -3 BEARS RAP – encourage children to participate in song and movements (use CD if needed) -Take 5 calming breaths -FAREWELL SONG (use CD if needed)	skills -Taking turns -Sequencing -Gross and fine motor -Keeping a steady beat -Counting - Transitioning	everyone can see -Speak clearly -Show joy in their sentences -Clarify before writing words down -Notice and appreciate patience -“you are waiting so nicely for your turn” -“it’s hard to wait isn’t it?’ -“Feel your body getting calmer with your breaths”. -“Think of your favorite thing today” (recap)	other team member to record story -Know words and movements to songs -Record teacher singing farewell song and practice
DEPARTURE 12:00	-Open door for parents -Share highlights of day -Debrief with teacher	-Check cubbies	-Transition from school to home -Connecting with families -Closure	-Smile and greet parents -Encourage children to share favorite part of day.	-Be sure to let teacher know of any issues -Reflect on day with team & celebrate!

Pause to Reflect
Do the example written planning forms make sense to you? What might you add or delete from the blank forms? Why?

What to plan

There are many resource websites and books with ideas to spark your initial planning. The best way to consider what to plan comes from the children. Always take into account WHO you are planning for and WHY you are planning. The rest will follow. In your ECE 104 Introduction to Curriculum for Early Childhood Education course, you will be presented with many considerations regarding what to plan. For now, the following is a general list to follow:

Considerations for planning:

- Consider both the group and individual children; be inclusive of all
- Know their interests
- Know their ability levels

- Focus on what they CAN do; start with where they are
- Understand your resources (time, materials, location,…)
- Understand development of the ages and stages you are planning for
- Plan for the “whole” child
- Know your goals and objectives
- Integrate curriculum and plan for all types of play
- Consider the families, communities and cultures represented
- Include others in the planning process when possible (colleagues, families, children)
- Plan ahead of time how to transition to the next segment of the day
- Jot down quick notes to refer to later when you reflect
- Don’t worry if it doesn’t go exactly as you planned, that’s expected
- Enjoy yourself and the children, remember “this is the fun part”

	Pause to Reflect Do these implementation suggestions make sense to you? What might you add or delete from the suggestions? Why?

Another consideration will be **how** you will implement the activities you plan. There are several different teaching methods to think about and most teachers will balance various strategies throughout the day:

-- High Context | | | | | -- Low Context	**Child Directed** – child introduces and directs activity **Child Demonstrated** – child demonstrates while teacher observes **Assist** – child explores and teacher provides minimal assistance **Scaffold** – child attempts and teacher provides guided support as needed **Co-Construct** – child and teacher or child and child work collaboratively **Teacher Demonstrated** – teacher demonstrates while child observes **Teacher Directed** – teacher introduces and directs activity

Figure 6.9.2: The continuum of child-directed to teacher-directed. [78]

There is also a variety of experiences to consider:

- **Structured** – planned, organized lesson following steps
- **Informal** – planned and introduced and then takes shape as children participate
- **Naturalistic** – emerges organically from the children with no formal plan

Again, teachers balance these types of experiences throughout the day, based on the children they work with, the environment and the activities themselves.

	Pause to Reflect Which teaching strategies do you feel most comfortable with? Why? Can you see times when you might use each of them?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Creating an Effective Learning Environment

Learning Objectives

- Understand various program types, delivery systems, quality standards, licensing and regulation structures in early childhood settings.
- Define and describe the difference between the physical, social, and temporal environments of an early learning program
- Describe why a well-designed physical, social, and temporal environment benefits young children

7.1: NAEYC Standards
7.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies
7.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children Code (NAEYC) of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)
7.4: Preview
7.5: The Classroom Environment as the Third Teacher
7.10: Evaluating the Environment
7.11: Behavior affected by environments
7.12: In Closing
7.6: Key Components for Creating Early Childhood Environments
7.7: Let’s Take a look at the Social-Emotional Environment
7.8: Let’s Take a Closer Look at the Temporal Environment
7.9: Creating an Inclusive Environment

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7.1: NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

Standard 1: Promoting child development and learning

Standard 4: Using Developmentally Effective Approaches with Children and Families

Standard 5: Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

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7.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

The following competencies are addressed in this chapter:

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance
- Special Needs and Inclusion
- Family and Community Engagement

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7.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children Code (NAEYC) of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section I: Ethical Responsibilities to Children

Ideals: – I-1.1, I-1.2, I-1.5, I-1.8, I-1.11

Principles: P-1.1, P-1.2, P-1.7, P-1.11

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Principles: P-2.1, P-2.2

Section IV: Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society

Ideals: I-4.1 (individual), I-4.6

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7.4: Preview

As we have learned in previous chapters, developing relationships, as well as understanding the developmental stages and individual interests and skills of children is crucial to effective teaching. This is accomplished through interactions and both informal and formal observations with the children in our care. This information will form the cornerstone of what is called “curriculum”, which includes both the planned and unplanned experiences that occur throughout the day. While you will devote an entire course to understanding curriculum in ECE 104 (Introduction to Curriculum in Early Childhood), we will visit some of the basic concepts below.

Quotable
“A great classroom environment comes from the heart, not the wallet. It’s built on love, laughter, and a feeling that everyone belongs.” - venspired.com

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7.5: The Classroom Environment as the Third Teacher

The environment affects every aspect of how children develop and learn and how teachers teach. In the article Inspired by Reggio Emilia: Emergent Curriculum in Relationship-Driven Learning Environments , Mary Ann Biermeier summarizes Loris Malaguzzi's concept of the **third teacher**:

"…the environment plays a central role in the process of making learning meaningful. So important was this notion, that Malaguzzi defined the environment as the third teacher (Gandini 2011). Malaguzzi's third teacher is a flexible environment, responsive to the need for teachers and children to create learning together. Fostering creativity through the work of young hands manipulating objects or making art, it is an environment that reflects the values we want to communicate to children. Moreover, the classroom environment can help shape a child's identity as a powerful player in his or her own life and the lives of others. To foster such an environment, teachers must go deeper than what is merely seen at eye level and develop a deep understanding of the underlying principles and of children's thinking, questions, and curiosities." [81]

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7.10: Evaluating the Environment

Once you have created your ideal early learning environment, it is suggested that you evaluate it on an on-going basis to make sure it is continuously meeting the needs of the children using it. A tool that is used extensively to assess and evaluate childcare programs is the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). The Environment Rating Scales were designed to offer guidelines for high-quality practices. According to ERS, a quality program must provide for the three basic needs all children have:

- Protection of their health and safety
- Building positive relationships
- Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience

The ERS further states, that “no one component is more or less important than the others, nor can one substitute for another. It takes all three to create quality care. Each of the three basic components of quality care manifests itself in tangible forms in the program's environment, curriculum, schedule, supervision, and interaction, and can be observed.” [108]

There are 4 Environment Rating Scales depending on the type of program being assessed:

- The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale

The ECERS scales consists of 35 items organized into 6 subscales:

- Space and Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Language and Literacy
- Learning Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure

You will learn more about this tool in ECE 103 (Observation and Assessment), but for further exploration now you can visit https://www.ersi.info

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7.11: Behavior affected by environments

Pause to Reflect

Can the environment influence a child's behavior? Take a moment to reflect on the following scenarios:

1. In an infant room where some of the children are walking and some are not, teachers have placed the immobile babies on soft blankets in the middle of the room. Activities for the mobile children are placed on the outside areas of the space. As the children waddle from one experience to another they step on the babies on the blankets.
2. A group of children is in the block area building some tall structures. "TIMBER!" one child shouts out loud, while the other 4 children clap their hands. The teacher looks at her watch and without a transition warning, the teacher yells "clean up time." The children run to another area.
3. There are 2 children at the easel boards painting. One child is waiting for her turn and says, "PLEASE hurry up – I've been waiting a long time." As one child is finishing her artwork, she drops some paint and the paintbrush on the floor and leaves it there. With paint on her hands, she holds her hands up high and walks all the way across the classroom to the bathroom to wash her hands, tracking a little paint along the way. The girl who was waiting picks up the paintbrush and begins to paint – she too steps in the paint on the floor. The teacher quickly grabs a towel and begins to wipe up the floor and sternly asks the children to please be careful.

What environmental changes might you make?

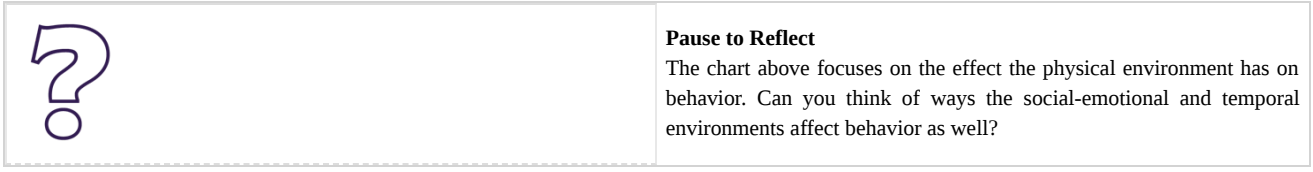
As demonstrated in the scenarios, a poorly arranged physical setting, transitions that are not well planned, and quick teacher responses can trigger challenging behaviors. Both teachers and children can become frustrated. By altering floor plans, planning for each segment of the day, and thinking through the communication and interactions we will have with children, we can avoid many challenging behaviors.

All three aspects of the environment; physical space, social-emotional tone, and routine can affect children's behavior. The environment sends very powerful messages about how to behave and feel.

Below is a chart of environmental modifications we can make to minimize certain behaviors by Dodge, Colker, and Heroman. [109]

Table 7.11.1: Environmental Modifications to Minimize Behaviors

Behavior	Possible Causes	Changes to the Environment
Running in the classroom	Too much space is open; the room is not divided into small enough areas; activity areas are not well defined.	Use shelves and furniture to divide the space. Avoid open spaces that encourage children to run.
Fighting over toys	Too many popular toys are one-of-a-kind; children are asked to share too often.	Provide duplicates of toys. Show children when it will be their turns (e.g., use a sand timer or help children create a waiting list for turns).
Wandering around, inability to choose activities	The room is too cluttered; choices are not clear; there is not enough to do, too much time.	Get rid of clutter. Simplify the layout of the room and materials. Add more activity choices. Revisit schedule.
Becoming easily distracted; not staying with a task	Areas are undefined and open; children can see everything going on in the room; materials are too difficult or children are bored with them.	Use shelves to define areas. Separate noisy and quiet areas. Assess children's skills and select materials they can use in interesting ways.
Continually intruding on other's workspace	Space is limited; poor traffic patterns prevent children from spreading out.	Define work areas for children (e.g., use masking tape or sections of cardboard for block building, and provide trays or placemats for toys). Limit the number of areas open at one time to allow more space for each.
Misusing materials and resisting clean up	Children do not know how to use materials appropriately; materials on shelves are messy; the displays are disorderly.	Make a place for everything. Use picture and word labels to show where materials go. Provide consistent guidance on how to clean up.



Pause to Reflect
The chart above focuses on the effect the physical environment has on behavior. Can you think of ways the social-emotional and temporal environments affect behavior as well?

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7.12: In Closing

The physical spaces, the tone we set, and the routines we follow will have a major impact on the children we work with. By planning based on their ages and stages, individual strengths and family, cultural and community backgrounds we can create warm, secure spaces where children can engage in all types of learning through play, take safe risks, and maximize their learning and development.

The environment is certainly a strong influence on a child's experiences in our program; considered the "third teacher" with all that it offers. In the next and final chapter of this book, we will explore the child's "first teacher", the family, and the ways that we can collaborate to make the most of a child's learning experiences between the child's two most important worlds, home and school.

References

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7.6: Key Components for Creating Early Childhood Environments

According to the California Preschool Program Guidelines (2015) “The teacher’s intentional design of the learning environment increases opportunities for children to have engaging and meaningful interactions with adults and peers. Along with interactions, instruction, learning activities, and routines, the learning environment is a central part of preschool teachers’ planning and implementation of curriculum (p. 120). [82] Therefore, when an intentional teacher is setting up the learning environment, we need to consider a combination of conditions. More specifically, we think about three key aspects: the **physical environment**, **social-emotional environment**, and **temporal environment** (Gordon and Browne, 2016). [83] We will examine each component more carefully as we read on.

Table 7.1: Relationship between Development and Learning

Component	Description
Physical Environment	How the physical space is designed and laid out, both inside and outside. This includes the learning centers/areas, furniture and equipment, and materials.
Social-Emotional Environment	The interactions and relationships between children, teachers, and family members.
Temporal Environment	The flow of time, including the timing, sequence, and length of routines and activities throughout the day.

Because developing relationships are at the core of our practices, Dodge, Colker, and Heroman’s *The Creative Curriculum* recommends we begin by thinking about the messages we send in our programs.

Quotable
“Teachers who are aware of the power of the environment arrange their space purposefully to convey the messages they want children to receive.”
-Creative Curriculum

They recommend that we focus on embedding these positive messages:

- “This is a good place to be.”
- “You belong here.”
- “This is a place you can trust.”
- “There are places where you can be by yourself when you want.”
- “You can do many things on your own here.”
- “This is a safe place to explore and try your ideas.” [84]

Let’s Take a Closer Look at the Physical Environment

The term physical environment refers to the overall layout of the indoor and outdoor space that children and teachers will use - this includes the furniture and equipment, the materials and centers, the entryway and walkways, and even the lighting, floor and ground covering, and wall decor. As suggested by the California Preschool Program Guidelines (2015), “High-quality indoor and outdoor learning environments set the stage for social-emotional exploration and growth. When we present children with a friendly, inviting, and culturally familiar environment, they feel comfortable and secure (pp.172-3). [85] In other words, the physical environment sends a clear message to children and their families that they matter, and that their safety and well-being are valued.

Designing Physical Environment

Designing a functional floor plan requires careful thought. Teachers usually want to create an aesthetically appealing space that is safe, comfortable, and practical. They need to work within the parameters of the age levels of the children they will serve, the building and outdoor space they have at hand, the cultural context of the families and community, and the regulations they must adhere to, such as those of Title 22.

Figure 7.6.1: Written floor plan [86]

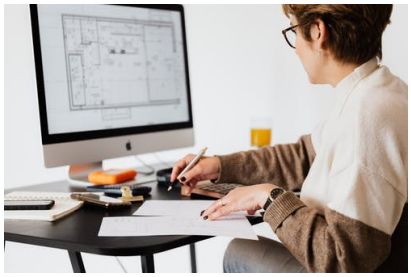


Figure 7.6.2: Graphic floor plan [87]

Creating a functional written floor plan of the inside and outside space is a valuable starting place. The same principles that applied to planning curriculum will apply to planning spaces. Having a written plan allows us to frame our thoughts and ideas and to modify them easily. Some teachers prefer to sketch on paper while others prefer a digital approach. Once we have a general sketch of the space, we can:

- Refer to the description of the ages and stages that will be in the space to get a better understanding of what development we are planning for. Begin with a broad plan since we usually do not know individual children yet. As we get to know them, we modify as needed.
- Consider the community and cultural context of our families and be sure to reflect that in our design.
- Think about safety and health concerns.
- Consider the large pieces of furniture and equipment that may not be easily moved.
- Consider the types of play and exploration that will take place and plan areas for each.
- Consider the materials needed for these areas and how they will be stored and made available to children.
- Consider transitions between areas.
- Consider lighting, flooring, ground cover, bulletin boards, etc.

Teacher Tip
"Get down on your knees to view the space from a child's perspective. This practice helps teachers create an aesthetically appealing space at the children's eye-level. Also, to ensure safety, stand in every corner of the classroom to scan the room for visibility. As noted in Title 22, for proper supervision, children must be visible to their teachers at all times, teachers should likewise be visible to their children. [88]

Figure 7.6.3: Early Childhood Indoor Environment [89]

Setting Up Learning Centers, Play Spaces, and Other Areas

As you begin to set up what you have planned, you might want to ask yourself some of these questions:

- Does the entryway look attractive and feel welcoming?
- Is there a family board to keep families informed and included?
- Is there an individual space for each child to keep belongings?
- How is the lighting?

- How does it smell?
- Are the active spaces away from the quiet spaces to maintain a reasonable noise level?
- Is there a cozy space where children can have privacy and a place to rest and recharge?
- Are all the developmental domains represented – Physical, Cognitive, Language, Social, Emotional, Spiritual?
- Are the materials age-appropriate and are there enough materials available?
- Is the space well organized and not overwhelming or chaotic?
- Are there clear pathways to the exits in case of an emergency?
- Are outlets covered, hand washing available and other safety concerns addressed?
- Would I want to be here as a child? Would I want my child here as a parent?

To set the stage for exploration and learning there are a variety of activity areas that will interest the children and promote all types of play to foster development and learning. To support the development of the whole child, the preschool framework suggests the following learning centers to consider both inside and outside:

- Art
- Blocks
- Dramatic Play
- Library and Literacy
- Math
- Science and Nature
- Music and Movement
- Computer Lab

Additional areas to incorporate when setting up your environment may include:

- Eating Area
- Gathering Area or Circle Time Space
- Bathroom and Sink
- Kitchen Area or Food Prep Space
- Space to rest

(Note: Before you set up your environment, you will want to review the regulations as outlined in California's Community Care Licensing Division. Title 22 stipulates the health and safety standards for licensed early childhood programs- including square footage requirements for indoor and outdoor environments.)

Furniture and equipment to consider:

- Child-size tables and chairs
- Adult-sized chairs
- Cubbies for personal belongings
- Shelves
- Storage containers for materials
- Materials and props
- Throw rugs, Carpets and blankets
- Safety mats
- Trash cans
- First Aid

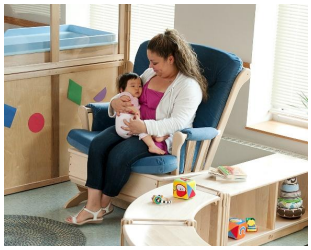


Figure 7.6.4: Infant indoor environment [90]

While most of the suggestions listed above can be used for every age group, the number and types of materials will vary depending on the ages and stages of the children we are planning for.

Pause to Reflect
How might you modify the suggestions above for various age groups?

1. Infant
2. Toddler
3. Preschool
4. School-age

When arranging your centers and spaces here are some tips:

- Design spaces for children to work and play independently or in small groups.
- Set up an area where the class can gather together as a community.
- Consider the number and size of centers. Make sure there are enough materials for children to be engaged in without being crowded and to minimize long wait times.
- Incorporate a management system that regulates how many children can be in a center at one time.
- Label your centers and spaces and include photos.
- Materials should be age appropriate and readily available to the children.
- Keep in mind that everything that is done inside can be set up outside as well.
- Because children respond positively to nature, outdoors is a perfect opportunity to promote all types of play, promoting exploration, development, and learning.

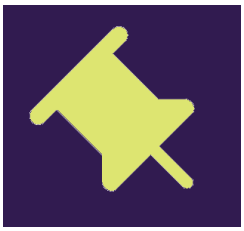
Figure 7.6.5: Preschool Outside Environment [91]

A Bit More About the Outdoors

A variety of equipment can be purchased to expand children's experiences outside, although a large budget is not required to create high quality outdoor spaces for young children. Programs may choose to provide a playground made of natural materials to immerse children in nature as well.

The following describe high quality outdoor spaces for children

- There is adequate space for gross motor play.
- The space is easily accessible and well organized so activities do not interfere with one another.
- The following materials are included:
  - Stationary equipment (such as swings, slides, climbing equipment).
  - Portable equipment (such as wheeled toys, mats, jump ropes, bean bags, balls).
  - Equipment that stimulates balancing, climbing, ball play, steering, tumbling, jumping, throwing, and pedaling.
- The equipment provides skill development at multiple levels.
- There is enough equipment that children do have to wait long to play
- The equipment is in good repair
- The equipment is appropriate for the age and ability of the children
- Adaptations are made for children with disabilities [92]



Teacher Tip

The article Heavily Decorated Classrooms Disrupt Attention and Learning (2014), suggests that “too much of a good thing may end up disrupting attention and learning in young children.” Children who spend a large portion of their day in highly decorated classrooms can be more distracted and spend less time on-task when compared to their counterparts who were in classrooms with minimal and organized décor. To help reduce clutter on the walls, you can use documentation boards to showcase what your children are learning in your classroom. Select a specific activity that you will highlight. Showcase actual work samples along with quotes from the children and descriptions of the development and learning that took place. When children see their work on display, they can feel a sense of belonging and pride. Families feel a connection as they view what their children are doing in their second home. As you finish with each board you can collect them for future reference and memories

In addition to showcasing what children are experiencing, you may want to use some type of poster to display daily schedules, basic routines (e.g., hand washing), and diverse images of children and families, basic learning concepts, and classroom expectations. These types of visual aids can help young children adapt to their environment more efficiently.

Another strategy that can help children develop their independence is the use of labels. For example, in the block area, the teacher can laminate labels onto the shelf indicating where all the blocks belong. Labels may include photos, drawings, and words in the languages familiar to the children. This strategy not only keeps the center more organized; it also provides children with the opportunity to clean up with minimal directions or adult supervision and encourages the use of many cognitive and motor skills.

Family photos are another way to decorate walls in a meaningful way for children and families. Inviting each family to bring a photo (or taking them at the school) and posting them prominently brings a sense of belongingness and community to the environment. Don’t forget the teacher’s families too! [93]

Children construct their own knowledge about the world they live in. Therefore, as intentional teachers it is our job to give them the tools and resources that they will need to be successful as they explore, examine, investigate, interact, and problem solve. It is our job to set the stage. It is our job to ensure that each center has a purpose and that the physical environment provides enough space to invoke possibilities and opportunities for learning and safe risk taking.

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7.7: Let's Take a look at the Social-Emotional Environment

According to the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, "s ocial development refers to a child's ability to create and sustain meaningful relationships with adults and other children, whereas, emotional development refers to a child's ability to express, recognize, and manage his or her emotions, as well as respond appropriately to others' emotions." Not only is the social-emotional environment important for a child's health and well-being, but it also provides a solid foundation for lifelong learning and interactions with others. [94]

A Closer Look at the Social Environment

The social environment is comprised of all the interactions that occur throughout the day. A well-designed social environment fosters trusting relationships by creating opportunities for children to interact with their peers and with their teachers. Effective teacher-child interactions are one of the most crucial ingredients for both social and whole child development. Experts in the field of early childhood education have long understood that effective teacher-child interactions are key predictors of student success.

Figure 7.7.1: Warm Interpersonal Interaction [95]

To create a classroom environment that supports positive social interactions Gordon and Browne (2016) suggest that teachers evaluate the quality of their interpersonal interactions. Take a moment to review the self-check questions.

Self-Check: Questions to ask yourself about your social-emotional environments

- Is there a feeling of mutual respect between the adults and children?
- Are the children interacting with one another?
- Am I modeling cooperative behavior?
- Am I planning activities that encourage peer interactions?
- What are my facial expressions, and what tone do I use when I talk to the children?
- Do I give genuine feedback and praise for their achievements?
- Am I spending quality time with all the children?
- When I'm feeling frustrated, do I take it out on the children?
- Do I allow the children to solve their own problems, or do I try to fix everything myself?
- When I need to talk to a child, do I get down to their level?
- Do I greet families with a smile and do I make an effort to connect with each family?
- At the end of the day when the child is being picked up, do I share a pleasant anecdote about the child's day or do I focus only on challenging moments?
- Do I provide opportunities for the children to help with daily tasks?
- Do I have opportunities for families to volunteer and be involved? [96]

The Emotional Environment

Young children are just learning how to regulate their emotions and behaviors and they need your guidance and support. Exactly what kind of support can you give a child? **Co-regulation** is defined as warm and responsive interactions that provide children with the support, coaching, and modeling that they need to express their feelings, wants, needs, actions, and behaviors. Co-regulation is an interactive process where teachers must know when to step in and when to step back. Teachers must pay close attention to each child's cues so that they can respond in a consistent and sensitive manner. [97]

To develop caring and responsive relationships with the children in your classroom, it is helpful to learn about each child's unique temperament and communication styles, their likes and dislikes, their strengths, and the areas where they need further support. Only through on-going observation and documentation will you truly discover what makes each child so special.

Figure 7.7.2: Teacher displaying a warm interpersonal tone [98]

Once you know each child's unique cues and personalities you will be able to address their individual needs and meet them where they are at developmentally. Additionally, you will be able to plan learning experiences that will help children develop their "self-regulation skills." **Self-regulation** is having the ability to control your behavior, actions, and emotions in response to a particular situation. In other words, it's having the power to calm yourself down when you get upset because things didn't quite go your way. When children can share their toys with their friends, wait their turn to ride the bike, and can use their words to express their feelings, they are practicing self-regulation.

Take a moment to review the self-check questions and think about ways you can support a child's emotional development.

Self-Check: Questions to ask yourself

- Are there cozy spaces for children to take a break?
- Are their puppets, dolls, and other activities that encourage children to express feelings?
- Do we sing songs and read book about feelings?
- Do I provide verbal prompts that help children express their wants and needs?
- Am I aware of each child's temperament?
- Am I aware of my own feelings and reactions when I am stressed?
- Have I taught children effective strategies to help calm them down when upset?

Creating Your Social-Emotional Environment

Research suggests that for children to thrive, they must first have their "basic needs" met. These "basic needs" are highlighted in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Chapter 2 (Developmental and Learning Theories). Once a child feels safe, secure, loved, and that they belong, they will be ready to learn. As an intentional teacher, it is up to you to create a social and emotional climate where children are comfortable enough to develop meaningful relationships and safe enough to explore their environment. In the article, *Creating an Emotional Safe Classroom*, Dr. Bruce Perry states, "Optimal learning is driven by curiosity which leads to exploration, discovery, practice, and mastery. In turn, mastery leads to pleasure, satisfaction, and confidence to once again explore. The more a child experiences this cycle of wonder, the more they can create a lifelong excitement and love of learning." [99]

A well-planned learning environment starts with you. When you create a positive social and emotional environment, children will feel secure. Once they feel secure and can trust that you will meet their needs, they will begin to explore the materials and interact with one another, and ultimately they will enjoy the environment you have prepared for them. Your classroom environment plays a critical role in helping children develop their social and emotional skills. Designing a welcoming classroom that promotes cooperation, mutual respect and tolerance will help children connect with you and with each other. To integrate responsive caregiving practices here are some teacher tips to help you set up an engaging social-emotional environment:

- **Be responsive to children's needs**. To help children feel more confident and secure, first meet their basic needs. Provide each child with warm, caring interactions that can be later modeled.

- **Provide Prompts**. Partner with children to manage their feelings and frustrations. Give them the words to express their feelings and to solve their own problems.
- **Use your positive personality as a teaching tool**. Your smile, your voice, and your touch, along with direct eye contact can make children and their families feel safe and cared for.
- **Be predictable**. Establish clear expectations and follow through. Children need consistent boundaries and need to know they can count on you for guidance.
- Find time for quiet moments. Solitude allows the brain to "catch up" and process the new experiences of the day. This leads to better consolidation of new experiences and better teaming.
- **Praise when possible**. Confidence and pleasure come from success. Everyone succeeds at something. Those with challenging behaviors need to know they can be successful too. Be observant. As you watch and listen you will gather useful information about each child. Watch to see what the children are curious about: What types of activities interest them? How are they feeling? What are their pressure points? When you follow their cues and respond to their needs, you can then plan for meaningful learning opportunities.
- **Celebrate diversity and help all children feel included**. Encourage children to communicate and express themselves. At times, they may feel more comfortable using their home language, body movements, gestures, signs, or drawing a picture. Plan activities that provide opportunities for children to work together as partners or in small groups. Assign a buddy to assist children that are new to the program or that may be struggling to stay engaged and on task. Encourage families to share.
- **Include both teacher-initiated and child-initiated activities**. Teacher-initiated activities are planned and led by the teacher, while child-initiated activities are inspired by the children's own interests and abilities. Materials are set out and children are encouraged to explore and create using their own ideas. [100] , [101]

Pause to Reflect

How would you promote social-emotional well-being for each age group?

1. Infant
2. Toddler
3. Preschool
4. School-age

The skilled and intentional teacher creates a classroom climate that promotes cooperation, mutual respect, and tolerance. The Teaching Pyramid Framework for Supporting Social Competence provides a model for promoting social competence and preventing challenging behaviors. [102]

Figure 7.7.3: The Teaching Pyramid [103]

Pause to Reflect
How does “Spiritual Development” or the concept of “me-ness” and “you-ness” for children fit into the Social-Emotional environment?

Assessing Teacher Interactions

In ECE 103 (Observation and Assessment) you will look more closely at The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed at the University of Virginia’s Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning as an assessment tool to improve teacher-student interactions and, ultimately, enhance student development and learning. It is used in many early childhood programs to support teacher’s growth. The CLASS tool describes three broad categories focusing on the way teachers are providing emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support to meet the needs of the children they work with. The tool looks at the following:

Pause to Reflect
You are an important part of the social-emotional environment and you need to take time for you. Every job has stress factors and being an early childhood teacher is no different. To have the positive energy you will need to manage a classroom, you should find healthy outlets to help manage your own needs and emotions.
What do you do to manage stress and maintain your emotional well-being?
Experiment and discover what works for you. Ideally, you will be able to model these techniques to the children. By providing children with a calm, peaceful, and nurturing atmosphere they will feel safe and secure in their social-emotional environment. And, you will have peace of mind.

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7.8: Let's Take a Closer Look at the Temporal Environment

Quotable
The most precious resource we all have is time. How will we use it? - Steve Jobs

Before your head hit the pillow last night and you fell fast asleep, what did you do? Did you brush your teeth? Did you take a shower? Did you read a book, watch TV or listen to some music? Would you say what you did last night followed the same routine that you do every night or was it unusual? How do you feel when you follow a regular routine? How do you feel when life throws you a curveball and nothing is as it should be? Now, imagine how a child might feel if every day they had to adjust to a new routine; if they never knew what to expect from one day to the next. Imagine how a child might feel if there was a predictable pattern to follow and if they always knew what was coming next.

According to Gordon and Browne (2016), the temporal environment has to do with the scheduling, timing, sequence, and length of routines and activities that take place at home and at school. With predictable schedules, routines, and transitions there is a sense of safety security. With a steady schedule and regular routines, children will be able to adapt to their environment as well as adjust to a new situation that may arise much more quickly. It also frees them up to be able to focus on the task at hand rather than worrying about how much longer they have or what will come next. [104]

The terms routines and schedules are often used interchangeably. Schedules and routines are utilized in preschool classrooms to:

- Help guide the day.
- Communicate to everyone what is happening and when.
- Foster engagement.
- Meet the needs of children to explore, persist, and elaborate.
- Promote a safe and fun place to learn and grow.

Figure 7.8.1: An example schedule [105]

Some considerations about daily routines/schedules include:

- They are a series of behaviors that occur on a regular basis
- Expectations for routines need to be planned and then taught to children.
- Created for developing and learning
- The amount of time for each block will vary and should be flexible.
- Most early childhood program routines include:
  - Arrival and Departure
  - Group or circle time
  - Activities
  - Center or free choice time
  - Snack time and meals
  - Outdoor time
  - Transitions between blocks of time

- They are sequenced – to create a flow of the day
- Choice should be incorporated whenever possible.
- They are balanced in terms of:
  - Active/quiet
  - Individual/small/large group
  - Teacher-directed/child-initiated activities
  - Noise level, pace, and location
- Teachers should be in tune with children's needs and engagement and be flexible.
- Shorten or lengthen blocks of time as needed.
- Plan for transitions as carefully as the segments of the routine themselves.
- Posting a routine provides a visual reminder for children.

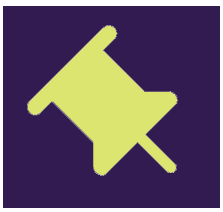
Figure 7.8.2: More examples of schedules and routines [106]

Incorporating Transitions into your Curriculum

Quotable
"Life is one big transition." - Willie Stargell

Transition is another word for change, and change can be challenging. The biggest transition children will experience each day with you is arrival and dismissal, when they move from one of their most important life spaces to another.

All routines include transitioning from one segment to the next. Every transition affords the opportunity to flow smoothly from one experience into the next or to become chaotic and stressful for children and teachers alike. Planning for each transition during the day is as important as planning the experiences themselves. With careful planning and flexibility, we can help children leave their present moment gently and purposefully, moving to the next adventure that awaits them.



Teacher Tip: Planning for Transitions

- Make sure the children understand the routine and that they will move from segment to segment
- Give a warning at least 5 minutes before a big transition and then again as it approaches
- Be sure to let them know what is coming next
- Use clear signals (flashing lights, ringing a bell, singing a song, etc.) and keep it consistent for that segment each day.
- Establish clear expectations about clean up time and mealtime transitions.
- Have all daily materials prepped and ready before children arrive.
- Create a calm atmosphere during transitions.
- Make transitions fun with games of cleaning up, moving in different ways
- If possible eliminate or at least limit the amount of time children must wait between segments.

How does the Temporal Environment Benefit Children?

Each child in your class is unique. When you provide a structured schedule with predictable routines and consistent transitions, you are creating a safe and secure environment where all children can thrive. Be providing clear expectations, you will help children adjust to their surroundings, adapt to the daily schedule and routine, and feel more comfortable knowing what comes next. Once they are comfortable in their setting, children will socialize with their peers, and they will use materials in a more meaningful way. Additionally, when the daily routine is consistent and predictable children are more likely to:

- Feel more confident to explore, create and take risks
- Stay on task and complete activities
- Be more engaged in learning activities and play
- Gain a sense of belonging
- Develop autonomy and independence
- Play more cooperatively and have fewer incidents

Here a few reminders when setting up your temporal environment:

- Post two daily schedules: one for the children down at their eye level, and one for their families on the Family Board
- State clear expectations and provide positive reinforcement
- Review the schedule regularly and adjust as needed based on the needs of the children.
- Keep routines consistent however, be prepared to make changes if necessary.
- Include visuals prompts (photos) on your daily schedule so children can track their day.

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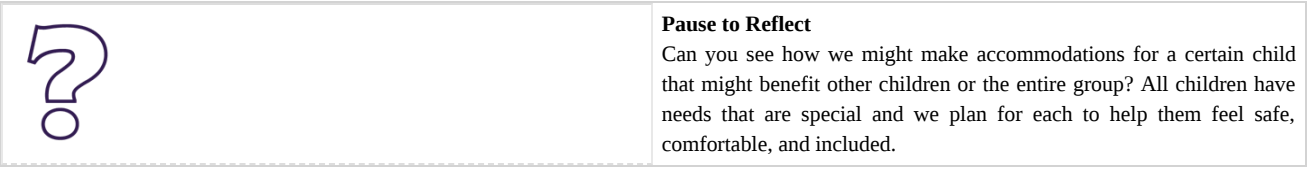
7.9: Creating an Inclusive Environment

In an Executive Summary, the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services (2015) defines inclusion in early childhood programs as "including children with disabilities in early childhood programs together with their peers without disabilities, holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations, and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their cognitive, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional development; friendships with peers; and sense of belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with the mildest disabilities to those with the most significant disabilities." [107] When planning your environment, be mindful that some of your children might require some additional considerations to fully participate in all the scheduled activities, routines, and learning experiences.

Partnering with families, some accommodations for children with special needs might include:

- Provide schedules with pictures for children who need visual reminders of the daily sequence of activities.
- Be flexible with the schedule; allow children more time to complete transitions and activities as needed
- Have alternative activities for those children with medical conditions or physical impairments who might have less stamina and tire more easily across the day.
- Pair children up to help each other during transitions.
- Allow for regular breaks.
- Partner with families to coordinate the child's daily schedule and routines, and to communicate progress.
- Modify chairs to meet children's needs (you can use tennis balls on the bottom of the chair for noise control or to make the chairs slide more easily)
- Put carpet squares, cushions, or a tape line on the floor to indicate where children should sit or stand
- Modify materials to make them easier for children with motor difficulties to hold and use (e.g., using pencil grips, large knobs)
- Provide specialized equipment (e.g., built-up handled spoons, adaptive scissors) to help children be more independent



Pause to Reflect
Can you see how we might make accommodations for a certain child that might benefit other children or the entire group? All children have needs that are special and we plan for each to help them feel safe, comfortable, and included.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Partnering with Families

Learning Objective

- Examine effective relationships and interactions between early childhood professionals, children, families, and colleagues, including the importance of collaboration.

8.1: NAEYC Standards
8.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies
8.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)
8.4: Preview
8.5: Working with Families
8.6: What is a Family?
8.7: Ethical Responsibilities to Families
8.8: The Diversity of Today's Families
8.9: Parenting Styles
8.10: Stages of Parenting
8.11: Valuing Families through Reflective Practice
8.12: Planning Partnerships
8.13: Behavior as it Relates to Family
8.14: Family Education
8.15: Communicating with Families
8.16: In Closing

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8.1: NAEYC Standards

The following NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation addressed in this chapter:

Standard 1: Promoting child development and learning

Standard 2: Building family and community relationships

Standard 5: Using content knowledge to build meaningful curriculum

Standard 6: Becoming a professional

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8.2: California Early Childhood Educator Competencies

The following competencies are addressed in this chapter:

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Dual Language Development
- Family and Community Engagement
- Professionalism
- Relationships, Interaction, and Guidance

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8.3: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011)

The following elements of the code are touched upon in this chapter:

Section II: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

Ideals 2.1 – 2.9

Principles 2.1 – 2.15

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8.4: Preview

This chapter examines how we, as early childhood professionals, create important relationships with families to build effective home-school relationships. As a professional, we need to include families at the center of the work we do with their children. Valuing the input of families creates a sense of belonging that promotes success in school and home.

Unity Poem
I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there,
The clay they used was a young child's mind
And they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher; the tools she used were books and music and art;
One was a parent with a guiding hand and a gentle loving heart.
And when at last their work was done
They were proud of what they had wrought.
For the things they had shaped into the child
Could never be sold or bought.
And each agreed she would have failed
If each had worked alone
For behind the parent stood the school,
And behind the teacher; the home.
-Anonymous

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8.5: Working with Families

While most early childhood professionals choose to go into this field because they want to work with children, it is important to understand that those children come with families. Those families are the child's first teacher and play a crucial role throughout that child's life. In the early years, there will be much interaction between the child's home and school environments and the important people in each.

In Chapter 1 (Theories), you may have noticed that the majority of the theories presented focused on the individual child and their development from "within". Constructing knowledge; meeting basic needs; developing a sense of trust. These are all very important. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model took a different approach and looks at developmental influences outside of the child, and how they impact who the child becomes. One very important system is the child's family. Children develop within the context of their families and the community that supports those families. As early childhood professionals, we build meaningful partnerships with the families of the children in our programs to ensure that their families are respected and valued in our program.

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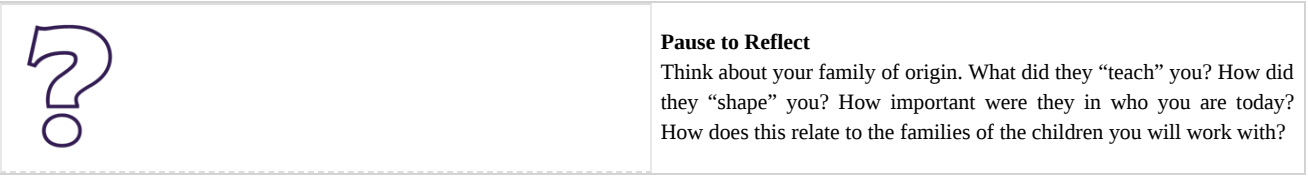
8.6: What is a Family?

In its most basic terms, a family is a group of individuals who share a legal or genetic bond, but for many people, family means much more, and even the simple idea of genetic bonds can be more complicated than it seems. [110] In your work with children, you will encounter many different types of family systems. All as unique as the individual children that are part of them, and all needing to feel that they can trust one of their most valuable assets to you.



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8.7: Ethical Responsibilities to Families

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct (May 2011) “families are of primary importance in children’s development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child’s well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration (the three C’s) between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child’s development.” [111]

The code consists of ideals and principles that we must adhere to as ethical professionals. The ideals (refer to the Code of Ethical Conduct) provide us with how we need to support, welcome, listen to, develop relationships with, respect, share knowledge with and help families as we work together in partnership with them to support their role as parents. The principles provide us with specific responsibilities to families in our role as early childhood professionals. These principles include what individuals must do as well as the programs that serve those families.

Pause to Reflect
After reviewing Section II – Ethical Responsibilities to Families in the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, what stands out to you and why? What seems to make the most sense and why? What might be easy for you to uphold? What may be challenging? How can you use the code to shape your interactions with families?

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8.8: The Diversity of Today's Families

Figure 8.8.1: This montage of photos shows a variety of families. [112]

The landscape of families has changed considerably over the last few decades. It is not that different types of families have never existed, but in today's society, we are making places at the table for this diversity. The families that we serve in our early learning centers reflect this.

Types of Families:

- Dual parent family
- Single Parent
- Grandparents or other relatives
- Teen parents
- Adoptive families
- Foster families
- Families with same sex parents
- Bi-racial/Multi-racial families
- Families with multi-religious/faith beliefs
- Children with an incarcerated parent(s)
- Unmarried parents who are raising children
- Transgender parents raising children
- Blended families
- Multigenerational Families
- Families formed through reproductive technology
- First time older parents
- Families who are homeless
- Families with children who have developmental delays and disabilities
- Families raising their children in a culture not their own

The list above is extensive; however, other family systems you will encounter in your work with children's families, are all worthy of respect and understanding. For a definition of the types of families listed above, refer to the Appendix.

Pause to Reflect
As an early childhood professional, why might it be important to understand each of these family structures?

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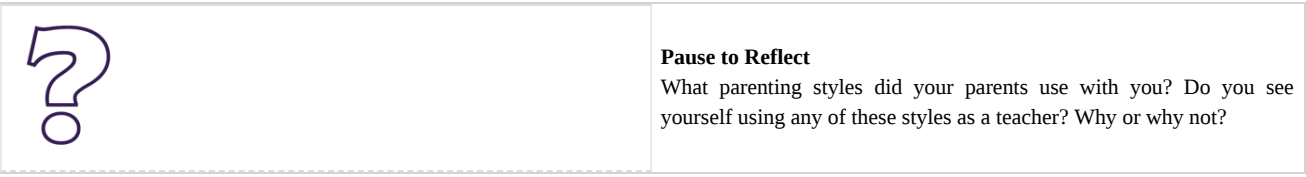
8.9: Parenting Styles

In addition to the types of families we will work with, there will also be different parenting styles within those families. Diana Baumrind, looking at the demands parents place on their children and their responsiveness to their child's needs, placed parenting into the following categories:

1. **Authoritarian Parenting Style**: Authoritarian parenting is a strict style in which parents set rigid rules and high expectations for their children but do not allow them to make decisions for themselves. When rules are broken, punishments are swift and severe. It is often thought of as "my way or the highway" parenting.
2. **Authoritative Parenting Style**: Authoritative parents provide their children with boundaries and guidance, but give their children more freedom to make decisions and learn from their mistakes. It is referred to as a more democratic approach to parenting.
3. **Permissive Parenting Style**: Permissive parents give their children very few limits and have more of a peer relationship than a traditional parent-child dynamic. They are usually super-responsive to their kids' needs and give in to their children's wants. Today we use the term "helicopter or lawnmower parenting."
4. **Neglectful Parenting Style**: A style added later by researchers Eleanor Maccoby and John Martin, neglectful parents do not interact much with their children, placing no limits on their behavior but also failing to meet their needs. [113]

While this research suggested that children raised with authoritative parents have better outcomes, we must be careful not to rush to judgment when working with families. Our style of parenting is deeply rooted in how our parents raised us. As early childhood professionals, we have the opportunity to collaborate with families to join in working together for the betterment of their children, while considering culture, personality, and other circumstances.



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8.10: Stages of Parenting

Ellen Galinsky traced six distinct stages in the life of a parent in relation to their growing child. Much like how a child moves through stages. By looking at these different stages of parenting, those who work with children and youth can gain some insight into parental needs and concerns. [114]

Table 8.10.1: Stages of Parenting

	Age of Child	Main Tasks and Goals
Stage 1: The Image-Making Stage	Planning for a child; pregnancy	Consider what it means to be a parent and plan for changes to accommodate a child.
Stage 2: The Nurturing Stage	Infancy	Develop an attachment to child and adapt to the new baby.
Stage 3: The Authority Stage	Toddler and preschool	Parents create rules and figure out how to effectively guide their child's behavior.
Stage 4: The Interpretive Stage	Middle childhood	Parents help their children interpret their experiences with the social world beyond the family.
Stage 5: The Interdependence Stage	Adolescence	Parents renegotiate their relationship with adolescent children to allow for shared power in decision-making.
Stage 6: The Departure Stage	Early adulthood	Parents evaluate their successes and failures as parents.

Pause to Reflect
How does understanding these stages assist in your work with parents?

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8.11: Valuing Families through Reflective Practice

Previous chapters have introduced reflection as a process we engage in to better ourselves, our practices, and by extension our programs. Working with families will bring an additional piece to our reflection as we continue to understand our values and beliefs and how they affect the way, we view different families. Are we feel more comfortable with some family structures over other family structures? Do we agree with certain family discipline techniques and not others? Do we connect with some families more than others?

These are all natural; after all, we all come from a family that has instilled certain beliefs and mindsets in us. Having these feelings is expected; acting upon them as an early childhood professional is different. All family members deserve respect and to feel valued. Just because they do something differently does not necessarily make it "wrong". We do not know what happens in a full day with that family any more than they know what happens in yours. We get a glimpse into the small portion they want to share with us, which may or may not be indicative of the rest of the picture. If we approach our families with a reflective lens, we can do much to understand and truly collaborate with them.

To begin this process, it is helpful to consider the following questions:

1. How can I learn more about that family?
2. What kinds of opportunities can I provide for families to be a part of their child's classroom experience?
3. How can I help all families feel connected, respected, and valued?
4. What judgments/assumptions do I have about different family structures? How do those judgments/assumptions get in the way of me connecting with all of my families?

Pause to Reflect
Which of these questions resonate with you? Are there others you might add?

Previous chapters have also repeatedly emphasized the importance of establishing relationships; providing a warm, safe, and trusting environment; and creating long-term connections with the children we work with. By extension, we can employ those same measures for each family member. A family is entrusting you with a very large and special portion of their life, often with very little knowledge of who you are. Finding ways to help them feel secure in their decision will go along way towards bridging the two most important worlds of a child's existence.

Pause to Reflect
What strategies that you have already considered using to make children feel comfortable and valued might you use with their families?

To serve families holistically, it requires a shift in our thinking. It is common for teachers to feel as if they are the experts, and that parents bring their children to us for our expertise. While this may be partially true, we need to understand that although we may be the experts in the way children develop and learn in general, parents are equal experts in their particular child. This acceptance of two complementary but different types of knowledge allows us to form true partnerships with families. It allows all parties to be better than they would on their own. How exciting it is, to learn from families all that they have to offer! How wonderful for a child to know that everyone is behind them, supporting them in the ways that they know best.

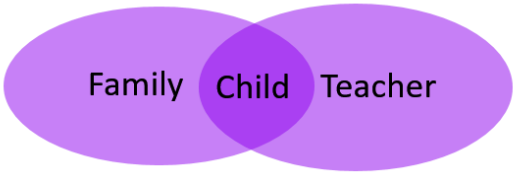

Figure 8.11.1: The relationship between family and teacher centers on the child

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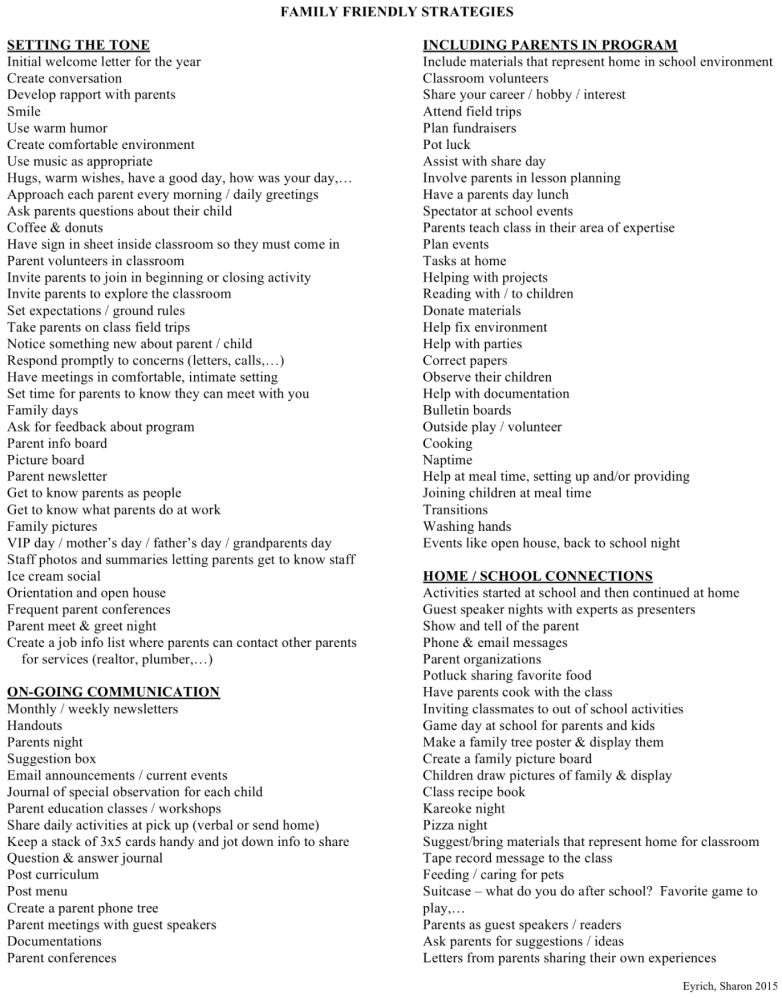
8.12: Planning Partnerships

As we learned in Chapter 6 (Curriculum) and 7 (Environments), planning can be quite valuable for many aspects of our early childhood programs. Planning to include families will be no different. Usually, teachers consider the following to collaborate with families throughout the year:

- Setting the tone (making connections to help families feel included and comfortable)
- On-going communication (valuing this crucial process throughout the school year)
- Including families in the program (drawing on their expertise, experiences, and support)
- Home-School Connections (extending experiences between home and school)



FAMILY FRIENDLY STRATEGIES

SETTING THE TONE
Initial welcome letter for the year
Create conversation
Develop rapport with parents
Smile
Use warm humor
Create comfortable environment
Use music as appropriate
Hugs, warm wishes, have a good day, how was your day,…
Approach each parent every morning / daily greetings
Ask parents questions about their child
Coffee & donuts
Have sign in sheet inside classroom so they must come in
Parent volunteers in classroom
Invite parents to join in beginning or closing activity
Invite parents to explore the classroom
Set expectations / ground rules
Take parents on class field trips
Notice something new about parent / child
Respond promptly to concerns (letters, calls,…)
Have meetings in comfortable, intimate setting
Set time for parents to know they can meet with you
Family days
Ask for feedback about program
Parent info board
Picture board
Parent newsletter
Get to know parents as people
Get to know what parents do at work
Family pictures
VIP day / mother's day / father's day / grandparents day
Staff photos and summaries letting parents get to know staff
Ice cream social
Orientation and open house
Frequent parent conferences
Parent meet & greet night
Create a job info list where parents can contact other parents for services (realtor, plumber,…)

ON-GOING COMMUNICATION
Monthly / weekly newsletters
Handouts
Parents night
Suggestion box
Email announcements / current events
Journal of special observation for each child
Parent education classes / workshops
Share daily activities at pick up (verbal or send home)
Keep a stack of 3x5 cards handy and jot down info to share
Question & answer journal
Post curriculum
Post menu
Create a parent phone tree
Parent meetings with guest speakers
Documentations
Parent conferences

INCLUDING PARENTS IN PROGRAM
Include materials that represent home in school environment
Classroom volunteers
Share your career / hobby / interest
Attend field trips
Plan fundraisers
Pot luck
Assist with share day
Involve parents in lesson planning
Have a parents day lunch
Spectator at school events
Parents teach class in their area of expertise
Plan events
Tasks at home
Helping with projects
Reading with / to children
Donate materials
Help fix environment
Help with parties
Correct papers
Observe their children
Help with documentation
Bulletin boards
Outside play / volunteer
Cooking
Naptime
Help at meal time, setting up and/or providing
Joining children at meal time
Transitions
Washing hands
Events like open house, back to school night

HOME / SCHOOL CONNECTIONS
Activities started at school and then continued at home
Guest speaker nights with experts as presenters
Show and tell of the parent
Phone & email messages
Parent organizations
Potluck sharing favorite food
Have parents cook with the class
Inviting classmates to out of school activities
Game day at school for parents and kids
Make a family tree poster & display them
Create a family picture board
Children draw pictures of family & display
Class recipe book
Kareoke night
Pizza night
Suggest/bring materials that represent home for classroom
Tape record message to the class
Feeding / caring for pets
Suitcase – what do you do after school? Favorite game to play,…
Parents as guest speakers / readers
Ask parents for suggestions / ideas
Letters from parents sharing their own experiences

Eyrich, Sharon 2015

Figure 8.12.1: Family Friendly Strategies [115]

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8.13: Behavior as it Relates to Family

The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct states I-2.6 – To acknowledge families' childrearing values and their right to make decisions for their children. [116] There are many conflicting messages about how to raise children effectively today. When we listen to the concerns of families, we are better equipped to offer them educational experiences that can open their hearts and their minds to other ways of raising their children. (Refer to the list of parenting resources at the end of this chapter). It is important to be mindful that there are many ways to effectively parent. Noting that will help early childhood professionals to have respect for differences in all aspects of our field.

In addition, behavioral expectations vary from culture to culture. Behavior can be verbal, expressive, non-verbal, or non-expressive. Our role is to understand what the child is telling us by their behavior and to provide the necessary guidance that elevates the child and their family's sense of being.

Pause to Reflect
What behavior expectations did your family have for you as a child? How does that differ from other people in your life? What judgments do you hold about those behavioral expectations? How could those judgments affect the relationships you want to build with families?

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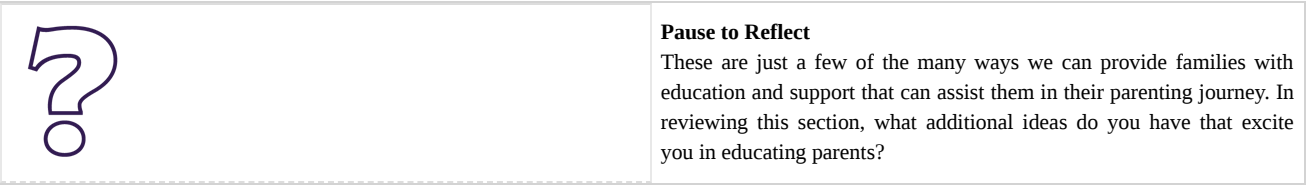
8.14: Family Education

One of the important roles of early childhood professionals is to provide opportunities for families to gain more skills in the role of parents. We accomplish this by using various strategies that work for each of the families that we serve.

These strategies may include:

- **Family workshops** – we offer these workshops to families who may want to have more information about parenting. At the beginning of the school year, you can send a questionnaire home to inquire about what the families at your center may want to know more about in their role as parents. Facilitation of these workshops by center staff/administration, by other professionals who work closely with children and families, or professional family educators provide a diverse lens in which to support families in their quest for support and information.
- **Meeting with families** – families often parent in isolation and need support in their role as parents. The teacher can offer to meet with them to listen to their concerns and to share ideas with them. This is accomplished in the context of understanding, compassion, and respect for the role that families play.
- **Support groups for families** - You may want to consider providing opportunities for parents to provide support to each other. You can accomplish this by creating a space for parents to meet both formally and informally. This helps to engender agency in families and to create parent leaders.
- **Newsletters** – provide families with parenting resources in a newsletter. You can write articles about specific parenting topics that the families at the center have identified. You can provide links to reputable parenting sites.
- **Providing community resources to families** – the Code of Ethical Conduct speaks directly to this. In I-2.9 it says: To foster families' efforts to build support networks and, when needed, participate in building networks for families by providing them opportunities to interact with program staff, other families, community resources, and professional services. P-2.15 states – We shall be familiar with and appropriately refer families to community resources and professional support services. After a referral has been made, we shall follow up and ensure that services have been appropriately provided. [117]
- **Resource library** – provide families with materials that they can check out. These resources could be parenting books, parenting articles, or parenting curriculum.



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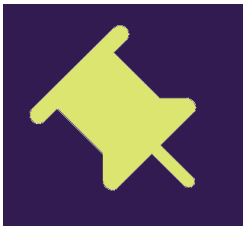
8.15: Communicating with Families

According to NAEYC's - 5 Guidelines for Effective Teaching , the fifth guideline states "Establish reciprocal relationships with families." Effective communication begins with cultivating a trusting and mutually respectful relationship. As a best practice, teachers must strive to make family members feel like they are valued members of the team. Teachers must strive to encourage open lines of regular communication and should collaborate whenever possible, especially when it comes to making important decisions about their child. It is ultimately the teacher's responsibility to set the tone that lets families know a partnership is highly valued. In this section, we will review what effective communication entails, and we will look at how to prepare for family conferences. [118]

Sharing Perspectives

Effective communication is based on respect for others. When we have regard for other people's perspectives, we are able to show genuine respect and can cultivate a caring classroom community. Perspectives are personal viewpoints that allow us to make sense of the world we live in. We develop our attitudes, beliefs, and biases based upon our own knowledge, experiences, family history, cultural practices, and interactions we have throughout our lives. Both teachers and families make crucial decisions on how to guide and support children based on their own perspectives. Without realizing it, our perspectives can influence the way we interact and judge others. If we recognize our biases and try to understand that everyone is entitled to their own perspective, we can strive to develop respectful relationships with our families as we continue to support children's development. Let us look at valuable contributions both teachers and families bring to the relationship.



Pin It! What Teachers and Families Bring

Teachers bring

- information about the child based on observation and assessment
- information about the child's developmental performance
- information about the curriculum activities and learning goals for the child
- knowledge about the best practices, theory, and principles in early childhood
- Information about the program's philosophy, job description, agency policies
- their own unique personality and temperament
- their own training, experience, and professional philosophy

Families bring

- an understanding of the child's temperament, health history, and behaviors at home
- expectations, fears, and hopes about the child's success or failure
- culturally-rooted beliefs about child-rearing
- past experiences and beliefs about school
- parent/caregivers' sense of control and authority, and other personal and familial influences

Developing a Collaborative Partnership

Figure 8.15.1: Family-centered care relies on respect and collaboration. [119]

As you engage in conversations, be aware that you communicate with your words, as well as your actions and body language. How can you create a warm and welcoming vibe that encourages open communication with families?

- **A smile goes a long way**. Make every attempt to greet each family at drop off time and be sure to say good-bye when they pick up their child.
- **Family Questionnaires**. It is important to realize that children come from diverse family settings and we should never assume to know the unique dynamics. In most cases, a child's home life is the child's first " classroom " and the parents are the child's first " teacher. " A questionnaire will provide useful insight and background information that you will need to approach the family more responsively.
- **Offer anecdotes**. Families appreciate hearing about special moments that occur in their child's day. Some parents may feel guilty or may struggle with missing out on those milestone moments. To help families feel connected, share those moments whenever possible.
- **Have opportunities for families to volunteer**. Include opportunities where families can get involved both in and out of the classroom setting.
- **Have a system in place for on-going communication**. Consider how you will share all that is happening at school and think about how families can inform you about what is happening at home. Some programs use handouts, emails, bulletin boards, and file folders to relay messages.
- **Share your ECE knowledge**. Keep in mind that childrearing practices are embedded in cultural practices. When we recognize that every family is doing their best that they can and wants the best for their children, we can provide support to families that matches their needs. Some families will need more support than others will. Provide parenting resources (handouts, books) and post information on community services (food pantries, free events, counseling) for your families.
- **Maintain confidentiality and keep sensitive information private**. Monitor what you say and write and NEVER share information about other families. Keep all documents, assessments, and important information stored in a safe place.
- **Honesty is the best policy**. Be direct and tell the truth (which is sometimes easier said than done). It is a good practice that if a parent asks you something and you do not have the answer- tell them you will have to get back to them. Guessing or giving inaccurate information can ultimately breakdown communication.
- **Follow through**. When you and a parent agree upon something (to talk at a certain time or to implement a new guidance strategy) be sure you do your part to keep up with the agreement. [120]

	Pause to Reflect Do these make sense to you? Why or why not? What would you add?

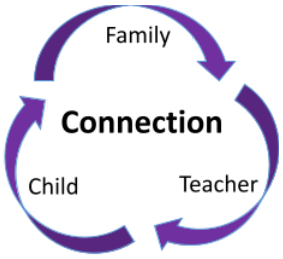


Figure 8.15.2 Cycle of Connection

Effective Family Conferences

The purpose of conferences with families is for both teachers and families to share information about the child and to find ways to foster continued growth. To ensure that family members understand the purpose of the assessment process, you may want to create a handout that explains what family conferences look like at your center and what your goals are as the teacher. Be mindful that many families work and may find it difficult to engage in a traditional face-to-face conference. We recommend that you provide alternative ways to communicate with families to discuss their child's progress.

Here are some other tips and recommendations to consider when planning effective family conferences:

- **Create a welcoming conference space**. Set up a private space for the conference and arrange chairs side by side. Provide light snacks and beverages to help families feel more comfortable and relaxed during the conference.
- **Be Prepared**. Preparation is vital to conducting a successful conference. Take time to review the child's work and make notes of what you want to discuss during the conference. Prepare any handouts/resources you may want to give families at the meeting. Have the child's portfolio up to date and in pristine condition.
- **Start the conference with a positive comment or question**. Families are often anxious about what teachers will say about their child, so start the conference with a positive comment and let them know you appreciate them being there. Ask a question to open the dialogue (this will also let you know what is important to the family and what to focus on).
- **Knowing the family's expectations will help guide your conference**. Ask the family for input on their child's strengths and needs, behavior, and learning styles. Actively listening to the family will help you learn more about the child and his or her home life. This will help you better understand the hopes and goals the family has for their child.
- **Remember that you are not a professional counselor, therapist, or social worker**. Some families may want to tell you about their personal family matters, or about the challenging situations, they are facing. Keep social service resources on hand and have them readily available to give to your families.
- **Stay focused**. Conferences can easily get off-topic for one reason or another. The child's development is the purpose of the conference, so circle back around as needed to keep the conference on track.
- **Ask open-ended questions**. This will facilitate conversation and encourage families to engage and participate during the conference.
- **Use family-friendly terms and avoid professional jargon**. We want to make sure that families understand what we are telling them. We use professional jargon with our colleagues/co-workers. We may even consider colleagues as professional jargon. Remembering that families did not study child development will help us to use family-friendly terms in all of our communications with families.
- **Have an inclusive support team on hand**. Some families may not speak English and may need someone available to translate information.
- **Engage families in the planning process**. To further support their child's development, families will need practical activities to do at home. Discuss ways to tie in what efforts are being made at school with activities that can be done at home.
- **Be reassuring**. Families are not usually aware that there is a range of mastery when is pertains to developmental milestones.
- **Be professional**. You must always use professional verbal and written communication skills when dealing with families
- **Be sensitive**. When dealing with children who have special needs, put the person before the disability. Make sure family members are familiar with any important terms and that they understand questions or statements about their child's abilities. Have resources available.
- **Focus on strengths and what the child can do**. Families appreciate looking at their children from a strength-based lens. That perspective builds trust with families to enable them to hear everything that they need to know about their child in an early learning environment.
- **Schedule a follow-up if needed**. Schedule a follow-up meeting as needed if the family has concerns or to check in on the child's progress. This is also best practices with all families as a follow-up could be merely an informal check-in when dropping off or picking up.
- **End the conference on a positive note**. Thank all family members for coming to the conference. Stress collaboration and continued open communication. Let families know their support is needed and appreciated. Express confidence in the child's abilities to continue to learn and develop. Share at least one encouraging anecdote or positive comment about the child to end the conference. [121]

Figure 8.15.3: A family conference in action. [122]

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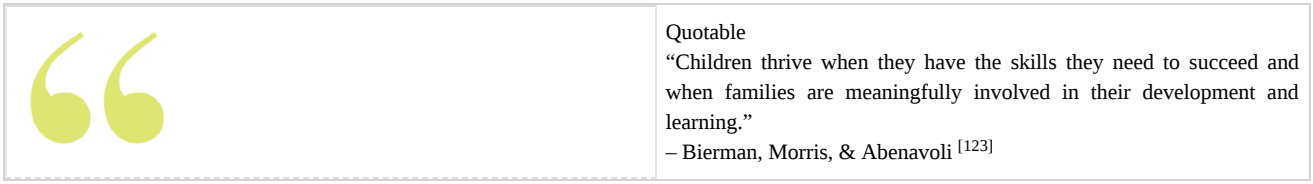
8.16: In Closing

As early childhood professionals, we need to include families at the center of the work we do with their children. Valuing their input creates a sense of belonging that promotes success in school and home. Understanding the unique systems, styles, and stages of each of the family members we welcome into our program enables us to collaborate more fully with each of them, providing the type of collaborative expertise that enhances each partner beyond their individual capacity.



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Appendix

9.1: Child Development Permit Matrix
9.2: Descriptions of Families

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9.1: Child Development Permit Matrix

On the next page of this Appendix you will find the Child Development Permit Matrix as references in Chapter 3

Child Development Permit Matrix - *with Alternative Qualification Options Indicated*

Permit Title	Education and Experience Requirements (Option 1 only: Both column requirements must be met)		Alternative Qualification Requirements (Options 2, 3, or 4)	Authorization	Five Year Renewal Requirement
Assistant (Optional)	***Option 1:*** 6 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD)	***Option 1:*** None	***Option 2:*** Accredited HERO program (including ROP)	Authorizes the holder to assist in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program under the supervision of an Associate Teacher Permit holder or above.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****
Associate Teacher	***Option 1:*** 12 units ECE/CD including core courses**	***Option 1:*** 50 days of experience at 3+ hours per day within 2 years	***Option 2:*** Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. CDA Credential must be earned in California.	Authorizes the holder to provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and supervise an Aide or Assistant Permit holder.	Permit may only be renewed one time with additional 15 units. Must meet Teacher Permit requirements within 10 years.
Teacher	***Option 1:*** 24 units ECE/CD including core courses** plus 16 General Education (GE) units*	***Option 1:*** 175 days of experience at 3+ hours per day within 4 years	***Option 2:*** AA or higher in ECE/CD or related field with 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting	Authorizes the holder to provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and supervise Aide or Permit holders above.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****
Master Teacher	***Option 1:*** 24 units ECE/CD including core courses** plus16 GE units* plus 6 specialization units plus 2 adult supervision units	***Option 1:*** 350 days of experience at 3+ hours per day within 4 years	***Option 2:*** BA or higher (does not have to be in ECE/CD) with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting	Authorizes the holder to provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and supervise all above including Aide. Also authorizes the holder to serve as a coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****
Site Supervisor	***Option 1:*** AA (or 60 units) which includes: • 24 ECE/CD units with core courses** plus 6 administration units plus 2 adult supervision units	***Option 1:*** 350 days of experience at 3+ hours per day within 4 years, including at least 100 days of supervising adults	***Option 2:*** BA or higher (does not have to be in ECE/CD) with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting; **Or *Option 3:*** Admin. credential *** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting; **Or *Option 4:*** Teaching credential**** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting	Authorizes the holder to supervise a child care and development program operating at a single site; provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****
Program Director	***Option 1:*** BA or higher (does not have to be in ECE/CD) including: • 24 ECE/CD units with core courses** plus 6 administration units plus 2 adult supervision units	***Option 1:*** Site Supervisor status and one program year of Site Supervisor experience	***Option 2:*** Admin. credential *** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting; **Or *Option 3:*** Teaching credential**** with 12 units of ECE/CD, plus 3 units supervised field experience in ECE/CD setting, plus 6 units administration; **Or *Option 4:*** Master's Degree in ECE/CD or Child/Human Development	Authorizes the holder to supervise a child care and development program operating in a single site or multiple-sites; provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a child care and development program; and serve as coordinator of curriculum and staff development.	105 hours of professional growth activities*****

NOTE: All unit requirements listed are semester units. All course work must be degree applicable and completed with a grade of 'C' or better from a regionally accredited college or university.

* GE Units: One course in each of the four general education categories: English/Language Arts; Math or Science; Social Sciences; Humanities and/or Fine Arts.

** Core Courses: One course in each of the following categories, Child/Human Growth & Development; Child/Family/Community or Child and Family Relations; and Programs/Curriculum. (All core course work must meet a minimum unit requirement of three semester units or four quarter units)

*** Holders of the Administrative Services Credential may serve as a Site Supervisor or Program Director.

**** A valid Multiple Subject or a Single Subject in Home Economics.

***** Professional growth hours must be completed under the guidance of a Professional Growth Advisor. Professional Growth Advisor Registry can be found at www.childdevelopment.org.

For more detailed information by the CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing, refer to Leaflet CL-797 at www.ctc.ca.gov.

This matrix was prepared by the Child Development Training Consortium. To obtain a permit application visit our website at www.childdevelopment.org.

Permit Matrix 12-2018

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9.2: Descriptions of Families

Here are descriptions of the types of families listed in Chapter 8.

Dual parent family

We often thing about this as a mother and father raising children. However, in thinking about the the diversity of families this could include same sex parents as they are also raising children together.

Single parent family (either by choice or through divorce)

This could be a male or female parent who either wants to be a parent and does not have a partner to create a child with or is raising children on their own due to divorce. Often, we think of single parents as female, but today as we continue to form acceptance of family structures, they are males who are also choosing to form a family on their own or raise their children (from divorce) on their own.

Grandparents or other relatives raising children (relatives can also be non-related family members who are close to the children)

Children whose parents are not able to care for them (for whatever reason), may be raised by their maternal or paternal grandparents or may be raised by extended family members including those family members that are not related biologically.

Teen parents

Today it is more acceptable for teens who become pregnant to raise a child. Sometimes they may do this together or separate. Sometimes they may do this with the help of their families. Teens who become pregnant while still in high school are often able to return to school and there are programs on high school campuses where teens may bring their child. They may receive parenting classes in addition to their high school curriculum.

Adoptive families (including transracial adoption)

Families who are not able to conceive a child or carry a child to term may choose adoption as a way to form a family. While this tends to be most common, there are families who consciously choose adoption over procreation as well as decide to add to their family through adoption. In any case, forming a family through adoption is a choice not taken lightly. There are many options in forming your family through adoption. You can choose to have an open or closed adoption. Open adoption refers to having a continued relationship with the birth parent(s) to just knowing who the birthparents are and everything in between. Closed adoption means that the family does not have access to birthparent(s) information. In addition, families may choose to adopt a child of the same race or of another race.

Foster families

Children placed in temporary care due to extenuating circumstances involving their family of origin may be placed in homes that are licensed to care for children. The adults who foster these children must go through strict protocols in order to care for these vulnerable children. The most common name for this arrangement is fostering, but you may also hear them described as resource families. In these cases, it is the intent to reunite the children with their family of origin whenever possible. When this is not possible, the children are placed in the system for adoption. The foster family may decide to adopt the children or adopted by another family. It is always the intent to find a permanent arrangement for children whenever possible, as we know that stability has better outcomes for children.

Families with Same-sex parents

Same sex couples, whether two men or two women, may choose to form a family and raise the children together. There are many options available when deciding to form their family. They may adopt, they may use reproductive technology, and they may use egg or sperm donors. In the case where two women are choosing to form a family, one of them may become pregnant and give birth to their child. According to recent research into children raised by same sex parents, there is evidence to suggest that since these children are planned, they often have better outcomes than originally was believed.

Bi-racial/Multi-racial families

These include families with children raised by parents from two different races, including parents who may be bi-racial themselves. This also includes multi-racial families. Society is becoming more acceptable of diversity within families, which provides children with better outcomes.

Families with multi-religious/faith beliefs

This includes families with children raised by parents who have different religious faith/beliefs. They may choose to raise their children with neither religion, either religion, or both.

Children with an incarcerated parent(s)

This includes families where one or both parents are incarcerated. This can be complicated for the family as the parent may spend some time away and then return home. While the parent who is incarcerated is away, the family structure changes. Each time the parent goes away and comes back adds to this confusion. Sometimes, children whose parent(s) are incarcerated may live in foster care while their parent is away and be returned to the parent upon their release, if it is safe for the child to do so.

Unmarried parents who are raising children

Today, many parents are deciding not to marry and raise children. The only difference is that they do not have a legal marriage license; however, their family structure is the same as dual parent families whether opposite sex or same sex.

Transgender parents raising children

This refers to two ways in which children may be raised by a transgender parent or parents. A parent may transition after already having children with someone of the opposite sex or they may transition prior to having a child and decide they want to parent.

Blended families

A blended family can be two different parents that come together each bringing their children from a previous relationship with them. Sometimes the parents that come together with children from a previous relationship may also decide to have a child together.

Multigenerational Families

These are families where multiple generations either live together in the same household or nearby. In America, this was a familiar practice during our agricultural boom. In other countries, this is an accepted practice, especially in Native cultures.

Families formed through reproductive technology

Today we have sophisticated medical advances to help parents who are infertile to become pregnant and give birth to their biological child as well as to use the biological material from someone else and carry that fertilized embryo to term. The variety of reproductive technology available to families is quite expansive. This is often at a huge financial cost to the families, as most medical insurance companies do not cover the medical expenses of infertility.

First time older parents

Today it is becoming more common for men and women to have children in their 30's, 40's, and even older.

Families who are homeless

We know that some children are raised without a stable home. The family may be living in their car, living in a hotel, a homeless shelter, or living in multiple dwellings also known as couch surfing. Families experiencing homelessness may be due to the loss of a job/steady income, being employed by making minimal wages that do not provide the means necessary to sustain housing (and other basic necessities), or other issues that may complicate the family's ability to sustain a stable place to live. Families do not always share their homeless status as there is often shame and embarrassment that society places on these families.

Families with children who have developmental delays and disabilities

This refers to families who have a child or children with developmental delays and/or disabilities. These delays/disabilities are varied. There also may be typically developing children in the family as well. This often places a burden on families, not only because of the time needed to care for a child who is not typically developing, but because society often misinterprets children who display behaviors that may be viewed as challenging.

Families raising their children in a culture not their own and in which English is not the primary language

This refers to families who may have immigrated here and whose children were either born in their country of origin or born in the United States. This duality of cultures can create challenges for the child and their family if societal expectations are that the family enculturate to the dominant culture. This results in children feeling shame about their family when they should feel pride in their family of origin.

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