South Dakota State University

ECE 228: Observation & Participation in Early Childhood Education

Concepts addressed:
Creating a socially Stimulating Environment

*DAP in the design, implementation, and evaluation of lessons that promote oral language expression and literacy in children

  D.A.P. = Developmentally appropriate practice
  Two types of D.A.P
  1. Individual
     a. Tailoring curriculum to meet the needs of an individual. Not all children are at the same age/stage at the same time. Although you should prepare for all the needs of your class you must also do what is best for the class as a whole.
  2. Age
     a. As children grow and mature they acquire new skills. In best practices we will do what is best for the children at the age they are at currently. For example, we do not ask toddlers to read the text in books. For their literacy development it is more appropriate for them to be identifying pictures and familiar symbols. That is what is appropriate for their age group in general. That does not however mean that some children may be more advanced or delayed on an individual level.

Best practices will combine both individual and age developmental appropriateness when planning curriculum and/or providing care.

*Creating and environment that promotes print awareness, reading readiness, and technology literacy

When creating an environment that is print-rich, or promotes literacy in all respects, you must remember that young children are at an “emergent”, or, base level of literacy understanding. The following are some things to consider in your environment
  a. Environmental print
  b. Reading materials available at child level
  c. Writing materials at child level
  d. Letting children see you reading/writing
  e. Letter recognition activities
  f. Computers

*Appropriate responses to children’s work

Always ask a child to “tell you about his/her work”. If you guess and are wrong you risk the child feeling like an incompetent learner. Also refrain from always stating “good job”. Pick out an aspect of what they have done and make a genuine comment on their ability “you have marvelous handwriting”. Also avoid comparing one child’s work to another’s.

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*Effective integration of multicultural activities into the classroom curriculum*

- Stages of diversity awareness
  1. Awareness - being aware of the differences/similarities among individuals
  2. Knowledge - finding out more about the differences/similarities
  3. Skills - applying the information within the curriculum/environment

Remember to include pictures and posters in your environment of differing ages, sexes, races, cultures, sizes, and abilities, to make all feel valued and included. There are also toys adaptable to all abilities, multicultural dolls, papers, paints, crayons, and markers depicting skin tones. A list of other things include
  - Serve different ethnic snacks
  - Dramatic play props
  - Globes/maps in the room
  - Field trips

You have the ability in each area of the classroom to incorporate all types of learners but you must make a conscious effort to do so.

*Child’s role in creating the environment and assuming ownership*

- Based on their interests
- Ask for their input
- Let them help in choosing materials
- Let them assist in guiding the curriculum
- They can help document
- Give them responsibility
- Praise them for their efforts

*Role of school as a resource to the larger community*

- The school is not only available for the education of the children in attendance. Schools can serve as a place for
  - Community events
  - In-services
  - Adult/parent programs
  - Resource and referral
  - Testing

Making the school visible to the community can help increase involvement.

*Important terms that relate to motivation and behavior*

- Interests
- Involvement
- Praise
- Acknowledgement
- Reinforcement
- Intrinsic/Extrinsic motivation

*How knowledge of human motivation and behavior should influence strategies for organizing and supporting individual and group work in the classroom*
Knowing what things motive different people will help you get all of the children in your care involved in and motivated to learn. Some like extrinsic rewards while others may find motivation from within. Each child will have to be treated as an individual to obtain maximum results. Also remember to ignore inappropriate behavior when you can and reward children when they are doing what you expect of them.

*Using natural and logical consequences*

Use consequences to let a child know his/her part in a problem and how he/she can change things. Allow children to accept responsibility for their own behavior. Encourages children to choose appropriate behavior because they know what the consequences of their behavior will be before they choose the behavior.

Natural consequences—things that happen naturally, or in course due to the child’s actions:
- Ex. Making snowballs without protection (mittens/gloves)

Logical consequences—safe consequences that would not have occurred naturally and are designed by an adult:
- Ex. Staying inside when there is inclement weather

*Providing positive guidance techniques*

Direct Guidance
Developing appropriate limits:
- Health and safety rules
- Appropriate limits ensure safety
- Encourage healthy self-control
- Good limits help children develop a firm set of values for respecting other individuals

State limits effectively
Teach and model appropriate behavior
Support children to use more appropriate behavior
Change something about a situation
Ignore behavior when appropriate
Redirect child’s behavior
Listen Actively
Deliver I-messages
Use natural and logical consequences
Teach conflict resolution and problem solving
Withdraw from situations (not time-out)
Use age appropriate expectations and state them effectively
Look at individual differences
Get to the child’s level
Look at independent functioning
Do not compare behaviors
Use a clear, direct communication style
Give reasons for rules and limits
Use positive reinforcement
Be consistent
Use positive statements
Use appropriate communication skills with children
  – Ex. Responsive vs. Restrictive Language
Responsive Language—language that conveys a positive regard for children and a respect for and acceptance of their individual ideas and feelings
  – Ex. We need to use our inside voices.
Restrictive Language—language that conveys teacher control by using power assertion methods, threats, commands, and criticisms
  – Ex. Be quiet!

Ignoring behavior (extinction) involves withdrawing reinforcement for a specific behavior so that the child will not repeat the behavior again
Some behaviors should not be ignored
  – If it endangers other children or the child
  – If it destroys or damages property
  – If the child treats someone rudely or intrusively

Divert/distract the child’s misbehavior
  – Warn and redirect
  – Remove child
  – Discuss feelings and rules
  – Wait for child to decide
  – Evaluate and assess with the child afterwards

Techniques to avoid at all times
Physical punishment of any kind
  – Ex. Spanking, pinching, etc.
Demanding children
  – Ex. “Say you’re sorry!”
Saying “no” without giving a reason
  – Ex. “Don’t do that!”
Stating things in negative ways
  – Ex. “You don’t know how to color right

*Modeling conflict resolution, problem solving, and anger management*
As teachers, we need to model and teach appropriate behavior methods by showing them or giving cues to direct their behavior.
  – Ex. Washing our hands before snack
  – Ex. Putting a sign up next to the snack table to remind children to wash their hands prior to sitting down.

Use few rules/limits in the classroom
When children are given effective praise and tokens, they are more likely to repeat the situation
  – Ex. I gave stickers to my children after I saw that everyone had helped pick up the room. The following day, everyone helped with the cleaning.
Increase options available to the child
Decrease options available to the child
Change the physical environment and time schedule if necessary
Other indirect guidance means
– Positioning self
– Appropriate room arrangement
– Interesting environment

Anger is an emotion; a feeling experienced when a goal is blocked or needs are frustrated

Causes of anger
• Conflict over possessions
• Physical assault
• Social rejection
• Verbal assault

How Children Express Anger
• Pinching
• Venting
• Name-calling
• Hitting
• Threatening
• Facial expressions
• Crying
• Sulking
• Avoidance

Helping Children Cope with Anger
• Have children use words to describe angry feelings
• Create a safe emotional climate
• Model responsible anger management
• Use active listening
• Anger resources (read books, public diaries, etc.)
• Plan discussions related to anger

*Giving timely feedback
  Feedback to children and parents
  Consistent
  Meaningful
  Realistic
  Sensitive
  Focuses on their work/abilities and no others

*Maintaining accurate records
  Accurate records on development/attendance/illnesses/accidents/conferences and any other function of the classroom or care center are vital to keeping communication and function clear. Without proper documentation there are opportunities for individuals to take advantages of the teacher/center/care provider.

*Communicating with parents and caregivers
• Three-way communication
• Focus on the child
• Building trust with parents
• Connection adaptors/methods
• High priority in every classroom
• Three-way communication involves parents, the child, and the teacher
• Open-ended and closed-ended questions are relevant
• Allowing parents to make personal decisions when necessary and yet giving adequate information regarding the child

Building trust with parents
• Even though your role is secondary, you still need to instill parents with the sense of trust as well as trusting your parents
• You need to initiate the relationship between the parents and yourself for comfort levels to emerge
• Begin by asking them what you are wanting from the program and from their own child

Building Connection
• Listed below are a few ways to educate and involve parents:
  ■ Parent Handbook
  ■ Group parent meetings
  ■ Home Visits
  ■ Newsletters
  ■ Information given out regarding community events, special activities, etc.
  ■ Displays of children’s artwork, stories, etc.

• Informal discussions while child is in school or on the phone
• Parents’ night in the classroom
• Classroom Visits
• Assisting the teacher in and out of the classroom-volunteering time
• Making equipment for the school/room
  ■ Helping with field trips
  ■ Putting on a fund-raiser for the school/class
  ■ Helping with the school/parent board
  ■ Helping children with homework/activity at home
  ■ Speaking in the class (parents)
  ■ Handouts/brochures that contain information

*Using objective behavior descriptions*

Behavior can only be inferred in most circumstances. When reporting behavior (unless the child has actually stated how they are feeling and why) one must state that the child “seemed like” or “appeared to be”.

*Responding to student behavior*

Use appropriate communication skills with children
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Be an active listener and repeat what they are telling you so that they can hear how you perceive what they have said or done.
*Effective arrangement of the indoor and outdoor spatial environments (e.g. allowing for individual cooperative, small and whole group activities; providing opportunities for children to play, explore, and discover)

Ample space must be provide for all areas (block, gross motor, computer/quiet, reading, dramatic play, art, science, etc.) Keep in mind that you will want to have quiet activities together (like books and computer) so that some activities do not detract from the value of others. Also, arrange spaces to allow for maximum movement for differing abilities and make sure furniture/supplies are arranged so that they do not allow for “runways” or paths that children might consider prime spaces to run in (with the possibility of getting hurt).

*Behavioral objectives: affective, cognitive, psychomotor, speech/language

Language
- Oral or handwritten communication between humans
- Literacy concerns language in written form
- Vary in rates
- Divided into four central components: sounds, words, sentences, language use
- Sounds-begins with infancy-coos, babbles, etc.
- Words-begins early toddler hood-identifies/labels/describes action words
- Sentences-begins with telegraphic speech, begin forming into sentences
- Language Use-communicate by putting the correct words into the correct format and able to communicate with others

Physical
- Physical Development is categorized into gross and Fine Motor Development
- Fine Motor Development-involves use of hands and fingers (self-help, puzzles, writing, cutting, etc.)
- Gross Motor Development-movements that allow the individual to become mobile and engage in skills requiring body movement (creeping, crawling, walking, running, hopping, jumping, skipping, etc.)

Social
- Learning how to relate to a variety of people in many different circumstances
- Self-concept-how people feel about themselves (related to emotional development)
- Peer interactions-relationships with teachers and children/adults
- Self-identification-process the child develops on who she/he wants to be
- Prosocial behavior-behavior that is conducive to positive social interactions

Cognitive
- Continuing process of learning about the world and all of its many components
- Piaget’s Theory focus-Preoperational Stage & Concrete Operational Stage
- Children learn best through manipulating real world materials and discovering facts, concepts, and relationships

Emotional
- The ability to recognize, label, and appropriately respond to their feelings
- Deal with feelings within the classroom
- Recognizing and Labeling Feelings
- Appropriate responses to emotions
*Learner objectives and outcomes*

Goal-broad generalized statements of what is to be learned…Think of these as the target to be reached.

Objective-specify what learners will be able to do or perform…objectives should specify four main things: 1. Audience 2. Behavior 3. Condition 4. Degree

Example of goal

To provide an opportunity to practice fine motor skills

- Rationale behind the goal: Two children were using clothespins in the dramatic play area and were having difficulty opening and closing them.

Objective to accompany the goal

Children will open the clothespins with ease to attach a sponge.

Children will watch while they put the clothespin (open) near the sponge and then release the clothespin to make it close and attach itself to the sponge.

*Probing the learner for understanding*

Open-ended questions are more effective at getting at student learning. Closed questions (yes/no) questions will not give as much information as “tell me about” or “explain…” or “what do you think”. But be wary of how you ask a question so that the learner does not make inferences about how they might think you want them to answer.

*Promoting problem solving*

Teaching Conflict Resolution and Problem Solving

When children have difficulties working with other peers, teachers, themselves, or with objects, they need to realize how to problem-solve or creatively resolve their conflict

- Ex. Two children are pulling a dinosaur back and forth and yelling at each other.
  One is yelling, “I had it first!” the other, “But you left it!” In order to have them problem-solve, talk out the situation with them. After the children have explained their personal sides, help them come up with a solution.

*Stimulating curiosity*

Find what the child is interested in and negotiate curriculum between what their interests are and content that you need them to learn.

Let children…. Give input Help document Aid in gathering materials

There are also times where you will have to use “incidental teaching” or teaching in the moment by planting something in the environment to help stimulate children’s curiosity.

*Promoting a caring community*

Respect Involvement Safe & healthy environments