

THE VOICE

Destiny Early Childhood Consulting

The Crisis: Quality Early Care and Learning

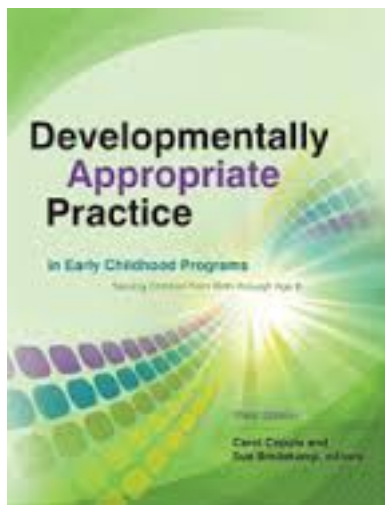
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Quality and early education

Traditionally, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) position statement on developmentally appropriate practice has been the hallmark for early childhood education.

NAEYC's standards on developmentally appropriate practices emphasizes the concept of whole child development, which is the fundamental premise for the child-centered approach to learning. Current trends in the field of early childhood education has shifted to the abandonment of this fundamental approach to learning in favor of more generalized academic practices, which is developmentally inappropriate because it opposed how children learn.



Foundations in early childhood education

Pioneers such as Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, as well as John Dewey have made essential contributions, which established a foundation for understanding and applying developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms. These contributions are indispensable and crucial in understanding and applying developmentally appropriate classroom practices.

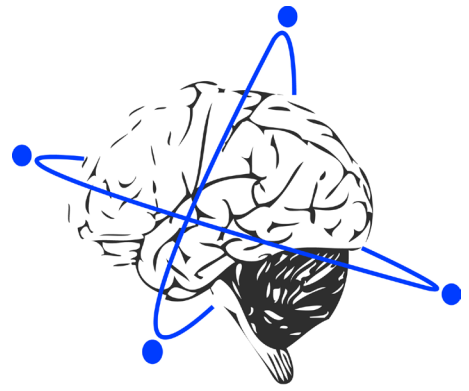


Developmentally appropriate classroom practices focus on whole child development and developmental domains:

Social, emotional,
language, cognitive,
physical:- fine and gross motor.

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Preschool, not kindergarten

The trend in early childhood education has shifted to a focus on teacher qualification in terms of a minimum of a bachelor's degree. This focus on teacher qualification has shifted classroom practices towards making early childhood programs more academically based, rather than developmentally appropriate. Researchers have indicated that although early childhood programs are focusing on early childhood educators having a minimum of a bachelor's degree, there is no authentic evidence that teacher qualification results in positive children's outcomes.



Best classroom practices

The real shift in early childhood education needs to be a mental shift where early childhood educators view themselves as facilitators, not teachers. Early childhood education is about reciprocity, that is, educators being a collaborative partner in children's learning. The classroom environment needs to focus on children's interest, not the interest of the facilitators/teachers. Activities in the classroom also need to be open-ended and meaningful, based on children's interest, developmental level, and every life experiences.



Researchers have indicated that developmentally inappropriate practices rush children through developmental stages and can distort brain growth. Drilling children with letters, numbers, shapes, and colors does not equal future academic success.