

The Family's Role

Excerpt from Chapter 5, The Creative Curriculum for Preschool

Home and school are a young child's two most important worlds. Children must bridge these two worlds every day. If home and school are connected in positive and respectful ways, children feel secure. But when the two worlds are at odds—because of apathy, lack of understanding, or an inability to work together—children suffer.

Our goals for you as a family, are:

Getting to know families—recognizing differences in families and making the most of initial contacts to learn about each family.

Making families feel welcome—creating a welcoming environment, introducing families to our program, building trust, and reaching out to all members of a child's family.

Communicating with families—taking advantage of informal daily exchanges and more formal methods of communication to share information and keep families up-to-date on our program.

Partnering with families on children's learning—offering a variety of ways for families to contribute, involving families in the program, and conducting conferences to discuss children's progress and to plan together.

Responding to challenging situations—recognizing families that are experiencing stress, dealing with misunderstandings, and handling differences that are based on strongly held philosophical and cultural beliefs.



Theory and Research behind the Creative Curriculum

Until the 20th century, little scientific attention was given to studying how children grow and develop. In the past 75 years, however, research has provided a great deal of information about childhood as a separate and distinct stage of life with its own characteristics. The application of this body of knowledge to teaching is called developmentally appropriate practice.

Put simply, developmentally appropriate practice means teaching in ways that match the way children develop and learn. A definition of developmentally appropriate practice was first advanced in a position paper issued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 1987 and updated and revised in 1997. The definition is based on an extensive review of the literature about child development and learning with input from knowledgeable practitioners.

According to NAEYC, developmentally appropriate practice provides children with opportunities to learn and practice newly acquired skills. It offers challenges just beyond the level of their present mastery and it takes place "in the context of a community where children are safe and valued, where secure" (Bredenkamp & Copple, 1997, pp. 14-15).

In our application of developmentally appropriate practice, we have sought to highlight the important balance between applying a general knowledge of child development with the particular knowledge a teacher gains by forming a relationship with each child and family. We have also incorporated new information about the content in literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology that preschool children can and should learn. The Curriculum describes each subject area and shows how to teach it in ways that support children's academic progress while respecting the way they grow and develop.

Excerpt from the Foundation Chapter in The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 4th Edition

Tobyhanna Army Depot
Child and Youth Services

The Creative Curriculum

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Phone: 570-895-6559

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Phone: 570-895-6156

Training & Curriculum Specialist: 570-895-9439
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Our Curriculum Approach

Excerpt from The Creative Curriculum

Our comprehensive, research-validated, integrated curricula provide everything our program needs to achieve positive, consistent outcomes for children. They address teachers' need to know what to teach and why, and how children learn best. Teachers respond to the individual needs and learning styles of all the children.

It guides teachers in planning a program that includes choice time, small and large group time, and studies that integrate learning across all the content areas.

Our curriculum rests on a foundation of more than 75 years of scientific research about child development and learning theory that leads to specific instructional strategies based on how young children learn best. The Creative Curriculum takes what has been learned from theorists such as Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Howard Gardner, as well as recent research studies about language, literacy, and math development.

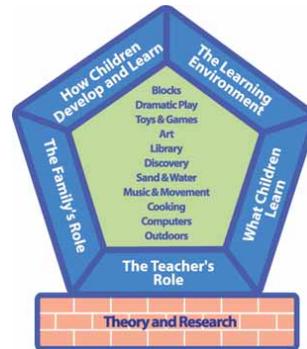
For young children, meaningful and long-lasting learning requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work. This is best accomplished through purposeful play facilitated by highly intentional teaching practices.

Creative Curriculum's comprehensive approach to curriculum are based on an understanding of the complex, social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development of young children and the way children learn.

The Framework

The foundation of Creative Curriculum is one that is based on early childhood theory and research. Encompassing the foundation are the five components that guide our curriculum: How Children Develop and Learn, The Learning Environment, What Children Learn, The Teacher's Role, and The Family's Role.

Within these five components, lies the interest areas where children's learning is enhanced through developmentally appropriate toys and materials: Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys & Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand & Water, Music & Movement, Cooking, Computers, and Outdoors.



The Developmental Continuum

Children don't master a particular skill all at once. There is a sequence of steps to expect as children progress toward reaching developmental milestones. Having a way to determine where each child is on the developmental road enable teachers and parents to decide what kinds of experiences will support his or her progress.

Through carefully planned observations, teachers document each child's progression. On a quarterly basis, the observations from teachers and parents are gathered, along with photos, anecdotes, dictations, and samples of the child's work. Using all of the information from the child's portfolio, his or her developmental stages are charted on the continuum. This information is then used to further plan deliberate and meaningful activities for each individual child and his or her needs.

How Children Develop and Learn

The Creative Curriculum assesses four areas of development: social and emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development.

Social/Emotional Development

Achieve a sense of self—knowing oneself and relating to other people—both children and adults.

Behaving in a pro-social way—showing empathy and getting along in the world, for example, by sharing and taking turns.

Taking responsibility for self and others—following rules and routines, respecting others, and taking initiative.

Physical Development

Achieving gross motor control—moving the large muscles in the body, especially the arms and legs, consciously and deliberately.

Achieving fine motor control—using and coordinating the small muscles in the hands and wrists with dexterity.

Cognitive Development

Learning and problem solving—being purposeful about acquiring and using information, resources, and materials.

Thinking logically—gathering and making sense of information by comparing, contrasting, sorting, classifying, counting, measuring, and recognizing patterns.

Representing and thinking symbolically—using objects in a unique way, for instance, a cup to represent a telephone

Language Development

Understanding and communicating through words, verbally, non-verbally, and written. Language is the principal tool for establishing and maintaining relationships with adults and other children.