



Developmentally Appropriate Practices in School-Age Child Care

Developmentally appropriate practices are based on the developmental needs of the children they serve. There are two aspects: age-appropriateness and individual appropriateness. Developmentally appropriate practices should be designed for the age group being served, taking into consideration the specific needs and differences of each child, including culture and language. Experiences for children should be interesting and mentally challenging as well as active and enjoyable.

To encourage developmentally appropriate practices, the children's environment should be well organized, clearly defined and easily accessible. Furniture should be arranged to promote both small group interaction and group discussion. Children learn best when they can construct their own knowledge and figure things out for themselves. As children grow, they develop and acquire new skills and experiences that facilitate learning. Developmentally appropriate practices are based on seven principles that acknowledge children as active learners.

PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE	ENVIRONMENT
To provide resourceful, caring staff	Be responsive to children's questions; give children enough time to play and interact with materials
To recognize the importance of peers	Provide opportunities to interact with peers; encourage friendships
To provide opportunities for same-age and mixed-age groupings	Encourage physical activities such as games, sports, field trips, kids' clubs, drama, music, dance and art
To promote self-selected activities and experiences	Offer open-ended activities; provide choice; allow children to organize activities themselves
To exercise positive guidance and discipline techniques	Involve children in rule making; help them understand limits; encourage problem recognition and solving
To provide a wide variety of activities individually as well as in small and large groups	Allow children to use modelling clay, to cook or to paint; offer opportunities for individual and team sports; let children choose books based on their age and interests
To provide for the whole child	Provide opportunities to modify and personalize the environment; allow for independence