

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a dark shirt and pants, is holding a large, rectangular white sign. The sign is tilted slightly to the right. The background is a light-colored, crumpled paper or fabric. The text on the sign is written in a simple, sans-serif font. The word 'Play' is in red, while the rest of the text is in black.

Play
is the
universal
language

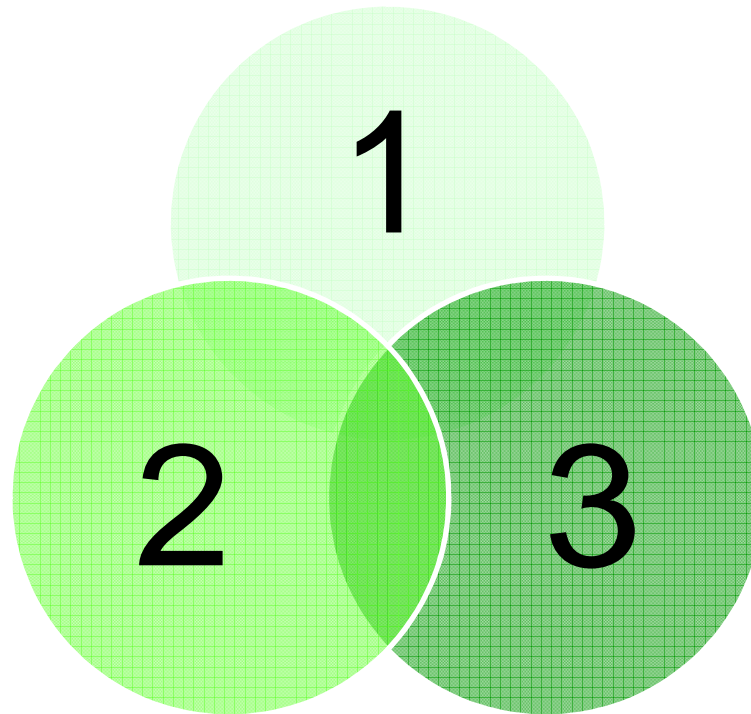
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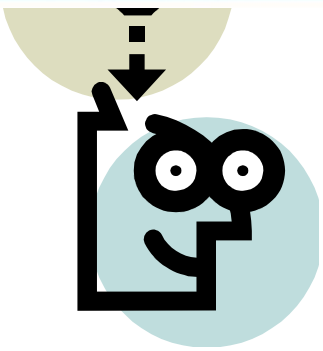
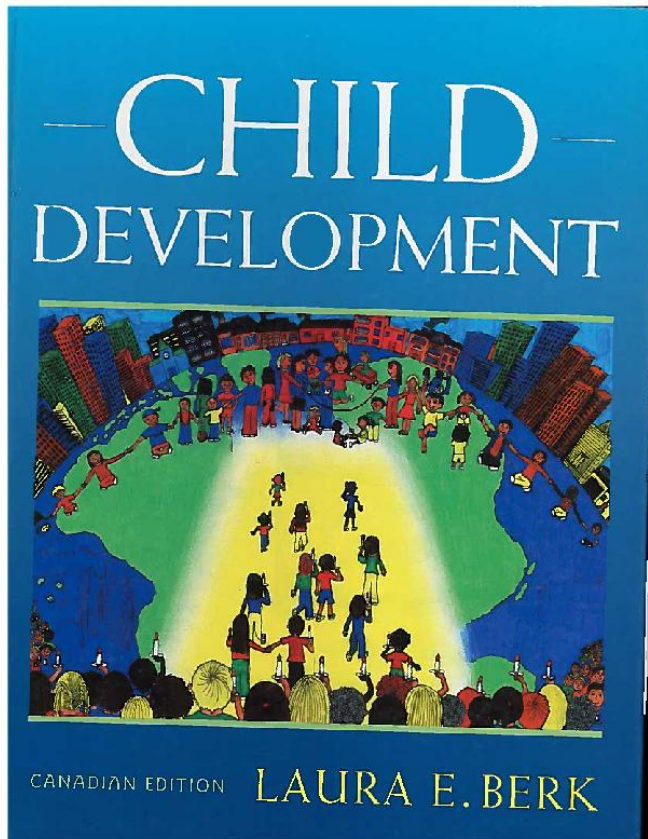
Early Childhood Education Unit



Through a collaborative approach, the unit partners with school divisions, other government departments (provincial, federal), Early Learning and Child Care, educational stakeholder groups, and parents to promote **developmentally appropriate programming and services** that help to prepare children for optimal early years learning and successful school entry.

3 Core Considerations of DAP: Developmentally Appropriate Practice



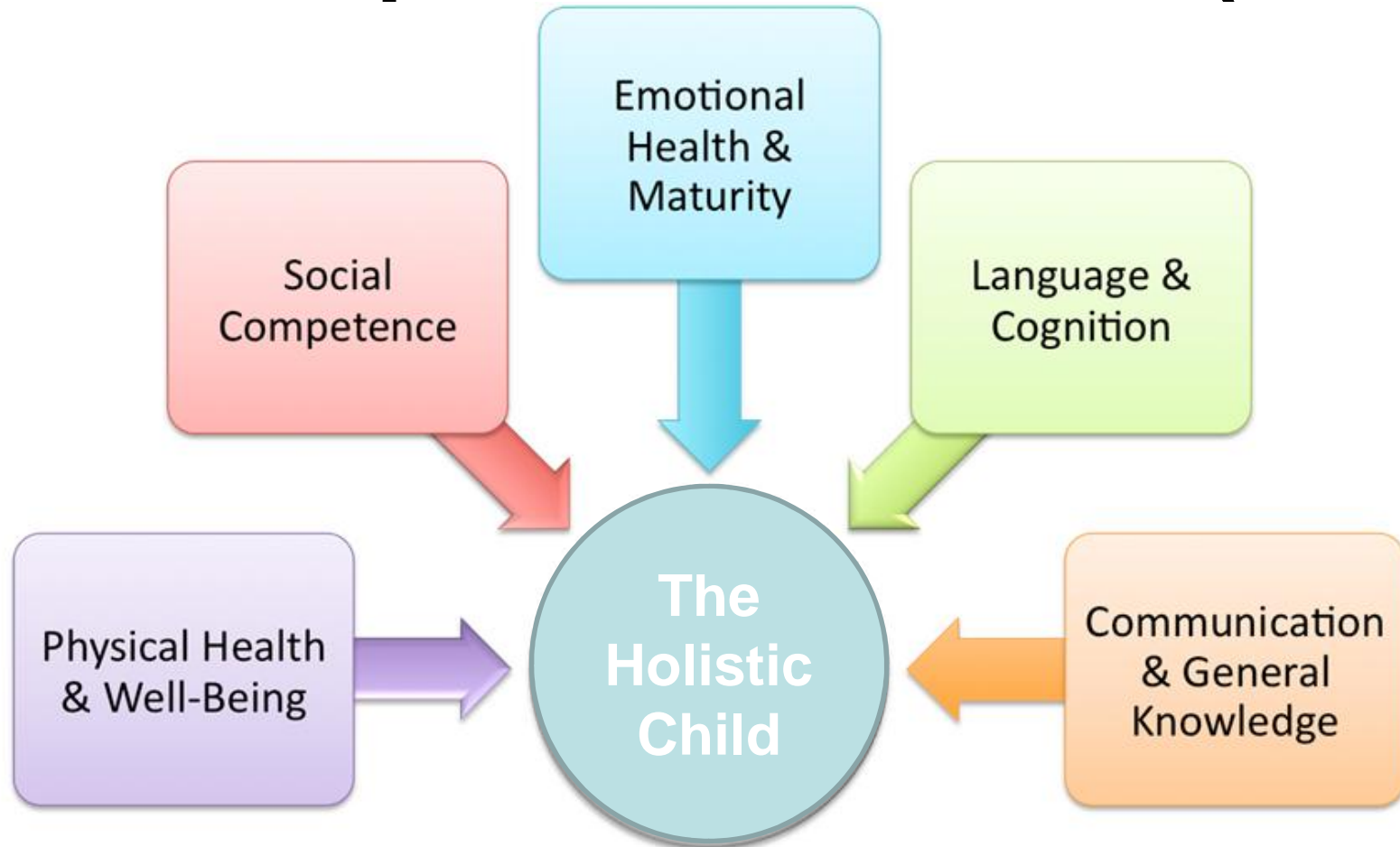


1. Know about child development and learning

- ...what is typical at each age and stage of early development
- provides a background to help us decide which experiences are best for children's learning and development

(where are those college textbooks?)

5 Developmental Domains (EDI)





2. What is individually appropriate?

- What we learn about specific children helps us teach and care for each child as an individual.
- Continually observe children's play and interaction with the physical environment and others to learn about each child's interests, abilities, and developmental progress.

3. What is culturally appropriate?

- Make the effort to get to know the children's families and learn about the values, expectations, and factors that shape each of the children's lives at home and in their communities.
- This background info helps us provide learning experiences that are **meaningful, relevant, and respectful** for each child and family.



As teachers begin to observe closely, they see children's development played out in their own unique classroom contexts, always influenced by the potentially overlapping cultures of home and school lives.

Henderson, Barbara Daniel R
Meier, Gail Perry and Andres
J. Stremmel 2012



The ABC's of DAP:

Practices based on decision making using

- Knowledge about development & learning
- Knowledge about individual children-Observe! Observe! Observe!
- Knowledge about children's socio-cultural contexts for living and growing (Vygotsky)



The 123's of DAP



- Procedures and routines that are consistent with children's development
- Learning experiences that help nudge children from one 'stage' to another
- NOT a curriculum-but a way of thinking about and working with children=
- YOUR pedagogical approach!



Play is the highest form of research
-Albert Einstein-



CMEC Statement on Play-Based Learning

At the recent World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, organizers, keynote speakers, scientists, experts, and political figures underscored the enormous benefits of early learning.¹ CMEC agrees with this position and believes that purposeful play-based early learning sets the stage for future learning, health, and well-being.

Learning through play is supported by science.

The benefits of play are recognized by the scientific community. There is now evidence that neural pathways in children's brains are influenced and advanced in the ir development through exploration, thinking skills, problem solving, and language expression that occur during play.

Research also demonstrates that play-based learning leads to greater social, emotional, and academic success. Based on such evidence, ministers of education endorse a sustainable pedagogy for the future that does not separate play from learning, but brings them together to promote creativity in future generations. In fact, play is considered to be so essential to healthy development that the United Nations has recognized it as a specific right for all children.²

Learning through play is supported by experts.

Learning through play is supported by early years experts. Lev Vygotsky identified play as the leading source of development in terms of emotional, social, physical, language, or cognitive development. Psychologist David Elkind that "play is not only our creative drive; it's a fundamental mode of learning."³ Such experts recognize that play and academic work are not distinct categories for young children; creating, doing, and learning are inextricably linked. When children are engaged in purposeful play, they are discovering, creating, improving, and expanding their learning. Viewing children as active participants in their own development and learning allows educators to move beyond preconceived expectations about what children should be learning, and focus on what they are learning.

Learning through play is supported by children and parents.

Learning through play is supported by children. It is their natural response to the environment around them. When children are manipulating objects, acting out roles, or experimenting with different materials, they are engaged in learning through play. Play allows them to actively construct, challenge, and expand their own understandings through making connections to prior experiences, thereby opening the door to new learning. Intentional play-based learning enables children to investigate, ask questions, solve problems, and engage in critical thinking. Play is responsive to each child's unique learning style and capitalizes on his or her innate curiosity and creativity. Play-based learning supports growth in the language and culture of children and their families.

When children are playing, children are learning.

Given the evidence, CMEC believes in the intrinsic value and importance of play and its relationship to learning. Educators should intentionally plan and create challenging, dynamic, play-based learning opportunities. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or combining with traditions simply because things have always been done that way. Intentional teaching involves educators being deliberate and purposeful in creating play-based learning environments — because when children are playing, children are learning.

FROM THE EXPERTS

Play lies at the core of innovation and creativity. It provides opportunities for learning in a context in which children are at their most receptive. Play and academic work are not distinct categories for young children, and learning and doing are also inextricably linked for them.

[Ontario Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program, 2010]

In play, children represent and transform the world around them, providing other children and adults with a window into their thoughts and perceptions, and often helping adults to see the world in new ways.

[BC Early Learning Framework, 2008]

Play expands intelligence, stimulates the imagination, encourages creative problem solving, and helps develop confidence, self-esteem, and a positive attitude toward learning.

[Dr. Fraser Mustard]

¹CMEC –Canadian Delegation Report from the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, September 27-29, 2010.

²The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 31. Ratified on February 11, 2010 from <http://www.unhcr.org/refugees/article/48989.html>

³Ward, E. (2004). "Developing a pedagogy of play." In L. Gutten (Ed), Early childhood education: A diary and of mine. London, UK: Sage.

⁴Ward, E. (2004). "Developing a pedagogy of play." In L. Gutten (Ed), Early childhood education: A diary and of mine. London, UK: Sage.



MIPs: Sharing Activity

- In your small group, read and discuss the Statement on Play Based Learning.
- Locate 2 or 3 *Most Important Points*.
- Then, take turns sharing a *MIP*-the most important finding or key idea from the reading.
- As a group, discuss themes or commonalities or differences that emerge from your reading
- In what ways might the info from this reading apply to quality teaching and learning in your ECD program?



The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) states

- **Intentional teaching** is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have always been done that way.
- **Intentional teaching** involves educators being deliberate and purposeful in creating play-based learning environments — because when children are playing, children are learning.



Did you know?

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international agreement that defines universally accepted rights for children.
- Article 31 of this agreement states that all children have the right to rest, leisure, **play and recreation** and to take part in cultural and artistic activities.

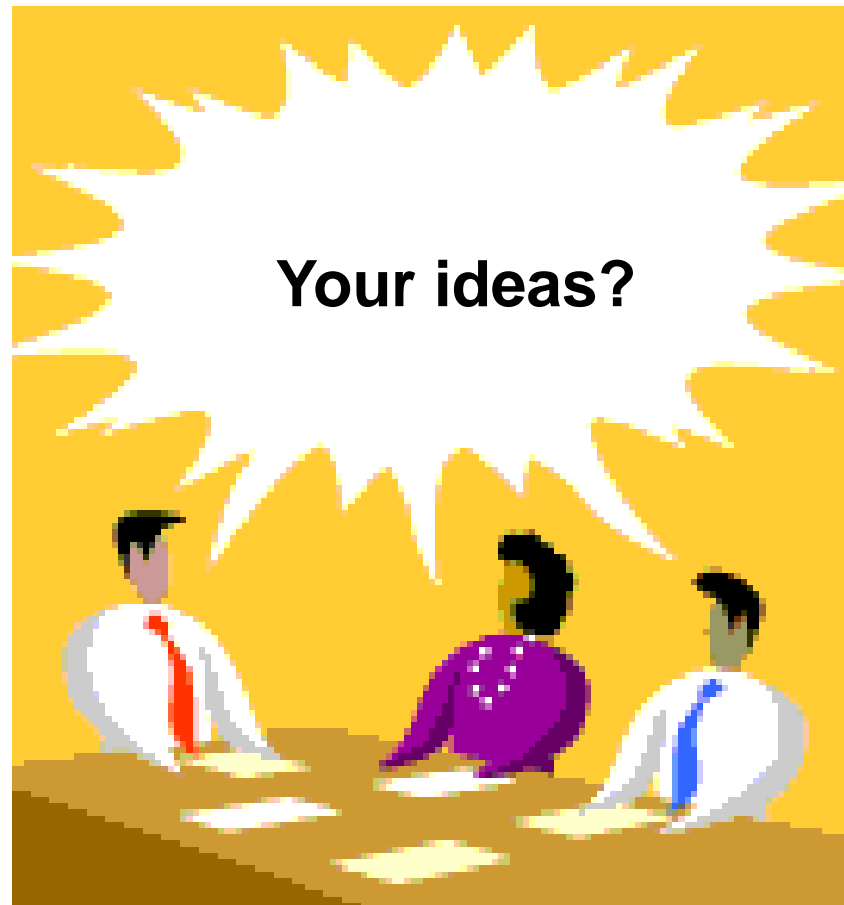
Think back to your own childhood... What kind of play do you remember enjoying?

- Where were you?
 - What were you doing?
- Who was with you?
- What smells/sounds/textures do you remember?

**Think
Pair
Share**

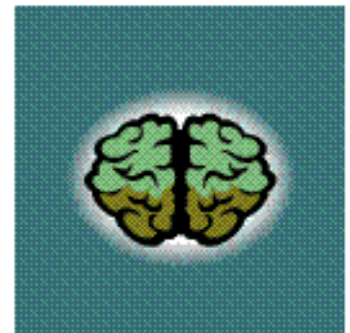


Why is play so important to the ECD community?



Why is play important?

- helps to develop the “whole” child
- sculpts the brain
- the vehicle that most powerfully grows the executive function of a child’s brain



The First 2000 Days

Play

- **Play is** a universal right.
- **Play is** the universal language of childhood.
- It is through play that children understand each other and make sense of the world around them.

Why is play important for learning?

- **SCIENCE:**
 - making and sharing observations about what happens when objects are put in water

Why is play important for learning?

- **MATH & NUMERACY:**
 - dividing toys or treats evenly, or
 - what is bigger than, smaller than, more than or less than

Why is play important for learning?

–LITERACY:

finding
familiar words
in signs,
retelling stories
or printing a list

Why is play important for learning?

- **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL:**
 - getting along with others,
 - making friends and being respectful

Why is play important for learning?

- **INQUIRY SKILLS:** using thinking skills such as how to recognize and solve problems

Why is play important for learning?

–**PHYSICAL:**

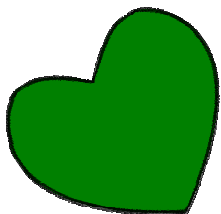
walking, running,
hopping, balancing,
throwing and
catching (large and
small muscle
development, eye-
hand coordination
skills)

A truly play-based program is one where children participate in a balance of child-initiated and adult-guided activities in an environment where play is encouraged and nurtured.



The heart

- At the heart of a child's healthy learning and development is honour for the child's family, culture and community.
- Nurturing relationships and a circle of support help the child to start strong and be prepared for lifelong growth, learning and success.



The 100 languages of children

- Reggio-inspired metaphor that highlights the many ways of expressing our thinking and our feelings, using many modes to represent our experiences.
- In addition to talking and writing, the 100 languages might include building with blocks, creating with wire and clay, painting, acting, dancing, singing, and more!

Play in Other Languages

- How do children from diverse cultural backgrounds manage in a Reggio-inspired classrooms?
- used play and materials as their strongest voices in communicating their ideas and in overcoming the cultural and language barriers in the classroom.
- formed a productive learning group and with teacher support carried out complex imaginative project work and engaged in many of the pedagogical processes inspired by Reggio Emilia.

Fraser, Susan *Theory Into Practice*, v46 n1 p14-22 2007



Cross-Cultural Understandings of Play

Children's play may be influenced by the dynamics of the family's culture. How different cultures look at and interpret play is based on cultural values and points of view, including the very definition of play. Teachers are encouraged to further develop their cross-cultural understandings of play (Hyun).

Hyun, Eunsook. Making Sense of Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Education, New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. 1998

Since children enter Kindergarten with various kinds of prior play experiences, expect to see some children who are highly skilled play partners, while others will require opportunities to expand their play repertoire further. In addition, some Kindergarten children born into refugee families may have had early childhood play experiences very different from those we may take for granted here in Canada. Play may have a restorative impact on development and relationships among children who have been affected by conflict and war (Hyder).

Hyder, Tina, War, Conflict and Play. Debating Play Series, Ed. Tina Bruce. Berkshire, England: Open University Press, 2005

Its a small world...

David Sobel's universal children and nature play motifs

Found around the world regardless of SES, ethnicity, ecosystem if children have time and access to safe places in nature

1. Adventure

- Children stalk, balance, jump, scamper through the natural world
- Activities with a physical challenge: mind/body link
- Walks are for adults, adventures are for children

2. Fantasy and Imagination

- Stories, plays, puppet shows, dreams
- “our role as storytellers and world creators precedes our roles as imparters of knowledge and cultural heritage”

3. Animal Allies

- Kinship relationship with animals
- Care and responsibility
- “What’s your favourite animal?”
- Caring for nature; emotional development
- Lassie, Rin Tin Tin, Free Willie, Beethoven

4. Maps and Paths

- Finding shortcuts, what's over the hill, around the bend, following a map to a secret place...
- Inborn desire to explore local geographies



5. Special Places

- Where was your fort? Den? Clubhouse? Tent? Hidden corner in a closet?
- Needed: loose parts to “construct” with
- Create primitive shelters, form tribes, ‘battle’ over resources
- “a bridge between the safe, protected world of the family and the independent self in the wider world”



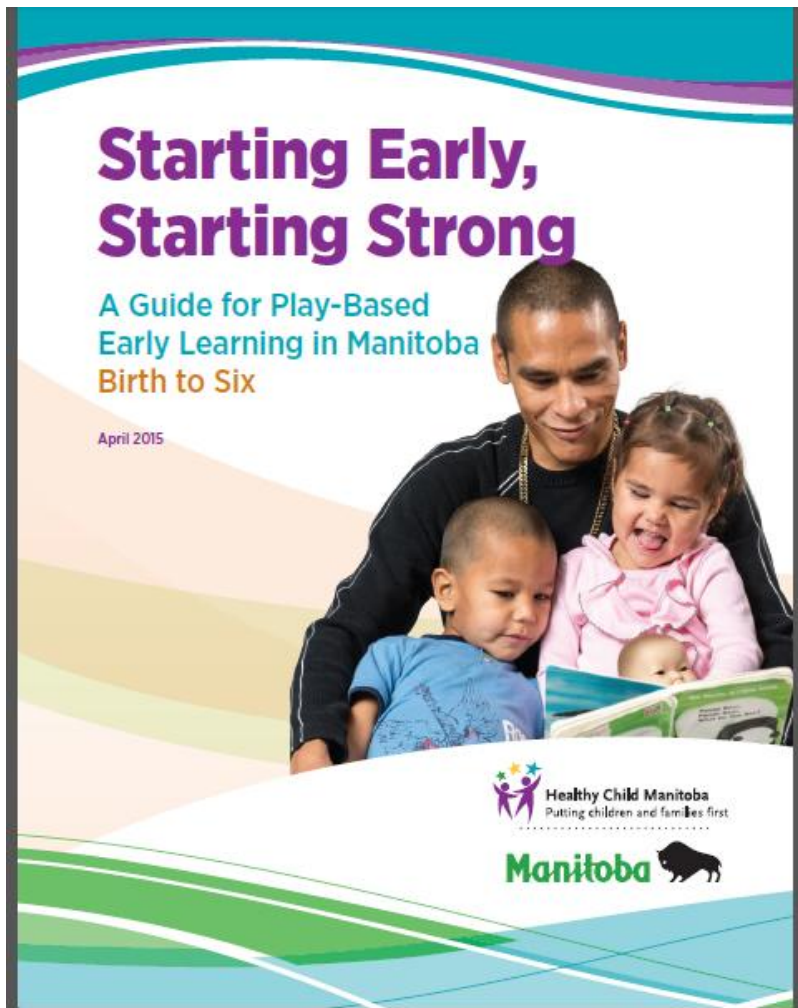
6. Small worlds

- Small worlds work wonders for children
- Provide emotional security and control over the micro-world
- Through creating miniature representations of ecosystems or neighbourhoods, children are helped to conceptualize the big picture—how it all fits together

7. Hunting and Gathering

- Genetically, we are still 'hunters & gatherers'
- Searching for hidden treasures
- Children's collections

A common pedagogical framework



http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/ecd/ecd_birthto6_playbased.pdf

Continuity and alignment

How? Kagan (1992) offers these strategies to promote success:

- written transition agreements between early learning programs, which outline roles & responsibilities, including the transfer of names and records
- attention to children's individual needs
- training for parents that offers information about early learning programs, the school system and available services
- visits by early years educators to early learning programs throughout the transition

Continuity

- What is in the K curriculum? (tip: watch for the release of *A Time for Learning, A Time for Joy*, 2015)

http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/childhood/docs/sneak_peek.pdf

A Time for
Learning
A Time for
Joy



A Resource for Kindergarten Teachers

Manitoba 

Developing Cultural Competence

- Get to know your families. Where do they live? What is the neighbourhood or community like? Where do families gather? (the hockey rink, the family centre, places of worship?)
- Engage in real conversations with families. What are their own strengths? How do they celebrate family milestones? What are their Holiday customs? If Newcomer, how did they come to Manitoba? How can their hopes and dreams for their children, their family history and customs enrich your day to day curriculum?
- from Teachers of Culturally Diverse Children.” *NAEYC Young Children* 60 (Nov. 2005): 1–8.

Developing Cultural Competence

- Reflect on your own bias, your assumptions, your values and beliefs when you encounter difference. “By placing yourself in situations that cause a sense of cultural disequilibrium, you can better understand how the children and their families feel ...” (Columbo, 2005 p. 6)
- Expand your knowledge base and form a professional learning community. Read about other cultures and belief systems and select educational books that recognize and celebrate differences in young children.
- from Teachers of Culturally Diverse Children.” *NAEYC Young Children* 60 (Nov. 2005): 1–8.

In Kindergarten...

- Belonging, learning, and growing are key themes in diversity education.

The Learning Environment

- **Grounded in the lives of children:** Good teaching begins with respect and concern for children, their innate curiosity, and their capacity to learn.
- Curriculum needs to be rooted in the real lives and contexts of the children in your classroom. Creating effective learning environments requires that the lives of the students, as well as the topics they explore, provide the content of the classroom experience.
- Children need opportunities to consider and inquire how their lives connect to the broader society.

The Learning Environment

- **Culturally sensitive:** since we “don’t know it all...”
- learn from your children, be a good researcher and listener as together you co-construct learning.
- As you work with children of diverse cultural origins and ethnicities, call upon families, your colleagues, and other community resources in order to understand and meet children’s needs and for insights into the communities you serve.

The Learning Environment

- **Equity-focused and anti-biased:** a curriculum grounded in social justice and awareness of social diversity is inclusive of every child in your class.
- With our increasingly diverse child population and nation, we must directly address issues related to race, class, gender, and other aspects of educational equity.
- We need to do more than simply “celebrate” diversity.
- We may take on the “hard stuff” of exploring why some differences translate into wealth and power, while others become the basis for discrimination and injustice. We can intentionally include the experiences and voices of diverse groups in our society.

Keep in
touch!

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