



Intentional Environments

Goal: Staff will gain an understanding how DAP will support creating intentional environments.

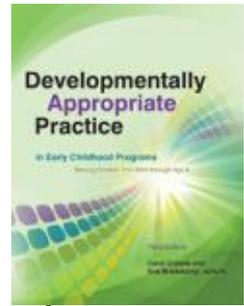
Outcomes: Staff will be able to...

- Explore importance of the physical environment.
- Discuss and articulate the core areas of DAP.
- Identify child development theorist and implications how to support the learning environment.
- Explore other considerations to the environment i.e., interactions, routines, activities & partnering with parents.
- Make DAP decisions when adding to the environment.

How important is the Environment?

- ▶ Small group activity: 
- ▶ Discuss what color you would paint your classroom if you owned your program.
- ▶ Why did you choose this color?
- ▶ How do you think children will respond to the decision you made?

3 Considerations for DAP



Knowing about child development and learning.

Knowing what is typical at each age and stage of early development is crucial. This knowledge, based on research, helps us decide which experiences are best for children's learning and development.

Knowing what is individually appropriate.

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

Knowing what is culturally important.

We must make an effort to get to know the children's families and learn about the values, expectations, and factors that shape their lives at home and in their communities. This background information helps us provide meaningful, relevant, and respectful learning experiences for each child and family.

- ▶ [*Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 3rd edition*](#)

“We teachers must be able to catch the ball that children throw us and toss it back to them in such a way that will continue the game, perhaps developing other games as we go along”.

(Filippini 1990 as cited in Edwards, Gandini and Forman 1993, 153)

Discuss implications of practice as it relates to supporting the individual and social cultural context. How would this impact your physical environment?



Implementing Child Development Theory Into the Physical Environment



Theory and Research behind The Creative Curriculum®

Theory/Research	Key Findings	Implications for Practice
Abraham Maslow	Meeting children's basic needs is essential to helping them succeed as learners.	Create an environment where children feel safe and experience a sense of belonging. Plan learning opportunities that are challenging yet "doable" to foster self-esteem and competence.
Erik Erikson	Social/emotional learning is a lifelong process that begins at birth. When adults are responsive to children's needs, children learn to trust, develop independence, and take initiative to assert themselves in socially acceptable ways.	
Brain Research	The brain builds itself through experience. The richer the experiences a child has, the more the brain grows. The first five years of life are sensitive periods for developing emotional control, attachment to others, and language. Stable, nurturing relationships are essential to healthy development and learning.	
Jean Piaget	Young children think differently from adults and their thinking changes over time. They construct their own understanding of concepts as they manipulate real, concrete objects and participate in firsthand experiences.	

Theory and Research behind The Creative Curriculum®

Theory/Research	Key Findings	Implications for Practice
Lev Vygotsky	Children grow cognitively not only by acting on objects but also by interacting with knowledgeable peers and adults.	
Howard Gardner	People can be intelligent in many different ways: linguistic, logical, musical, spatial, bodily, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic.	
Sara Smilansky	Children learn through play: functional play, constructive play, games with rules, and dramatic or pretend play.	
Resilience Research	Children who have faced hardship are not doomed. They can develop the strength and skills necessary to deal with adversity when teachers use good early childhood practices.	

Other considerations of the environment

- ▶ What is the most important aspect of the learning environment?

You!



Other considerations continued

- ▶ Your interactions must be intentional as the physical environment.
 - ▶ Your interactions can be social/emotional and instructional .
 - ▶ Activity – Using the theorist activity – discuss intentional interactions for each theory or research.
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Considerations Continued

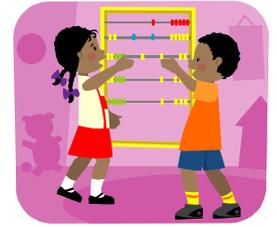
▶ Time - How does your Daily Routine impact the physical environment?

How does it impact your Interactions?

Using the theorist activity,
How does your daily routine support these theories and research?



Activities in the Environment



- ▶ How do you make decisions about adding activities into your environment?
- ▶ How do your observations and reflections what children are learning impact the activities you add to your environment?
- ▶ Using your theorist activities – what activities do you do to support these theories and research?

Parents Playing a Part of the Environment

- ▶ Why is this an important strategy when you are developing a learning environment.
- ▶ How are you currently doing this?
- ▶ What are new ideas?



Making Decisions

Small group activity:

Choose materials then use what you have learned about DAP to decide...

- ▶ Why did you choose this item(s)?
 - ▶ Where would you place this in physical environment?
 - ▶ How and when would you introduce this item(s)?
 - ▶ What do you hope to observe as children use this item(s)?
 - ▶ What is the learning potential for children?
 - ▶ What can you do support the learning potential?
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Reflections:

- It is important to use your knowledge of child development, your understanding of each individual child and the social cultural context of your classroom before making decisions about your learning environment.
- Not only the physical environment is important but also your interactions, daily routine, activities and partnering with parents are considerations that need to be part of creating an intentional environment.
- What is one idea that you will use as a result of this workshop?

Steve Erwin serwin@kaplanco.com

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Intentional Environments
Notes and Reflections

What color did you choose and why?

3 Considerations for DAP

Knowing about child development and learning.

Knowing what is individually appropriate.

Knowing what is culturally important.

What did this quote mean to you?

We teachers must be able to catch the ball that children throw us and toss it back to them in such a way that will continue the game, perhaps developing other games as we go along”.

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Why is it important to use research or theorist to help make intentional decisions about:

The physical environment –

Daily Routine –

Your Interactions –

The way you provide activities –

Working with families as parents -

Presented by Steve Erwin serwin@kaplanco.com

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