Applying Emerging Research on School Readiness in the Field

Diane Trister Dodge
Teacher-child interactions: Key to positive outcomes

Three ways of applying the research

1. Choosing and fully implementing a research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum

2. Using authentic, ongoing assessment

3. Providing leadership and targeted, ongoing support for teachers
A research-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum
Curriculum: A Road Map for Planning Your Program

• a **way** to get where you want to go

• the **what**, **why**, **how**, and **when** of teaching young children

• **6 key components** of a comprehensive early childhood curriculum
I. A Foundation in Research & Theory

- Maslow
- Erikson
- Brain Research
- Piaget
- Vygotsky
- Gardner
- Smilansky
- Resiliency

Research and Theory
Reports

National Research Council (NAS)

- *Eager to Learn: Educating our Preschoolers*
- *Neurons to Neighborhoods*
- *Preventing Reading Difficulties*
- *Accountability in Early Childhood*
- *Early Childhood Assessment: What, Why, and How*
- *Mathematics in Early Childhood*

• National Early Literacy Panel
  - *Developing Early Literacy*
II. What Preschool Children Are Like

- Child Development
- Individual Differences
Four Developmental Areas

- Social and Emotional
- Cognitive
- Physical
- Language
Individual Differences

- Temperament
- Interests
- Learning Styles
- Life Experiences
- Gender
- Culture
- Special Needs
- Dual Language Learners
III. How to Create a Positive Learning Environment

• The Physical Environment

• Program Structure

• The Social Environment
The Physical Environment
Program Structure

Our Daily Schedule:
- Group Time
- Choice Time
- Story Time
- Snack Time
- Outdoors
- Lunch
- Small Group Time
- Rest Time
Social-emotional predictors

- Social competence
- Self-regulation
- Positive relationships with others
What we want teachers to do

- Develop classroom rules with children
- Plan for transitions
- Promote friendship-making skills
- Teach social problem solving
- Respond to challenging behaviors
IV. What Children Should Learn

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- The Arts
- Technology
Language and literacy predictors

- Oral language
- Phonological awareness
- Knowledge of the alphabet and the use of print
- Book “reading”
- Writing
What do we want teachers to do?

• Build vocabulary
• Teach about the alphabet
• Promote phonological awareness (hearing the sounds in words)
• Read books aloud and engage children in storytelling every day
Mathematical learning

- Number sense
- Geometry (space and shape)
- Measurement
- Patterns (algebra)
- Data analysis
What do we want teachers to do?

• Expose children to numbers
• Talk about shapes and spatial relationships
• Offer measurement experiences
• Help children recognize, create, and repeat patterns
• Involve children in sorting and organizing information
Science and Social Studies

Through studies, children conduct in-depth investigations to find answers to their questions.
V. The Teacher’s Role

• Effective teachers know when to observe and document.

• They know when to teach specific skills or concepts.
• Learning takes place in whole-group activities.

• Learning takes place in small-group activities.

• Learning takes place during choice time activities in interest areas.
Research Findings: Benefits of Play

- Memory
- Background knowledge
- Self-regulation
- Prosocial behavior
- Language Development

- Positive approaches to learning
- Symbolic thinking
- Literacy skills
- Mathematical thinking
VI. A Partnership With Families

- Getting to Know Families
- Communicating With Families
- Partnering With Families
- Resolving Differences
2 Ongoing, authentic assessment
Early Childhood Assessment: What, Why, and How?

Assessment for teachers is...

...gathering information in order to make informed instructional decisions.
Teachers use ongoing assessment to:

- Monitor development and learning
- Guide planning and decision making
- Identify children who might benefit from special services
- Report and communicate with others

~DAP/NAEYC 2008
Curriculum and Assessment: The Ongoing Cycle

1. Collecting facts
2. Analyzing and evaluating what you learned
3. Planning for each child and the group
4. Reporting on children’s progress
Collect samples of children’s work

**Writing Sample**

**Photo**

**Artwork**
Analyze what they’ve learned:

- Attention and persistence
- Self-direction and independence
- Small muscle control
- Applying knowledge
- Using symbols
- Expressive language

At meeting this morning, Cydney told us she had been on a drawbridge on her way to the beach. Later she said she wanted to build a drawbridge and she needed some string. This is what she made.
Plan for each child and report on children’s progress
Leadership and targeted, ongoing support for teachers
Why administrators matter

- They set the tone for the organization
- Guide the development of a shared vision
- Make decisions based on data
- Use reflective supervision
Data-driven decision making is based on:

- Assessment data on how children are progressing in each classroom

- Data on how well teachers are implementing the curriculum and assessment system as intended
Reflective supervision

- Meeting regularly with staff
- Listening to their experiences, thoughts, and feelings
- Providing support by offering empathy and guidance
Coaching: targeted, ongoing support for teachers

Coaching responsibilities:

• Relationship builder
• Model
• Observer
• Communicator
• Helper
• Collaborator
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Curriculum Implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What will I do to get through tomorrow?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progressing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• I have the basics. I’m ready to go deeper, to sharpen my teaching skills and to learn more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refining</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• I have a high level of expertise and others look to me as a leader. I’m reflective about my teaching and am very curious about children’s thinking.</td>
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Examples of feedback for each of these levels

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>• I observed ____. Here’s a strategy that can help.</td>
<td>• I observed _<em><strong>. Let’s figure out how we can</strong></em>.</td>
<td>• The children were so engaged during that activity. How did you decide on your plan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why don’t you try___. Let me show you an example.</td>
<td>• Let’s think about ways you might handle this situation.</td>
<td></td>
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Support for Coaches

The Coach’s Guide to The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool
A Step-by-Step Resource for Individualizing Professional Development

Cate Heroman, Judy Jablon, Charlotte Stetson & Carol Aghayan
Foreword by Diane Trister Dodge

Includes “Coaching Teachers for Improvement on CLASS™ Dimensions in The Creative Curriculum® Classroom,” co-authored by Robert C. Pianta, Ph.D., Karen M. La Paro, Ph.D., and Bridget K. Hamre, Ph.D.
Comprehensive Curriculum + Ongoing Assessment + Leadership and Targeted Support for Teachers = Positive Child Outcomes