

Growing Together: Understanding and Supporting Early Childhood Development

Foundations of Early Learning: Social, Emotional, and Cognitive

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What is your question???

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Our Approach: Think-Feel-Do



Images of the Child that Have Guided Thinking, Inquiry, and Practice:

- **Children as Little Adults**
- **Children as Possessions**
- **Children as Deficient**
- **Children as Incomplete**



Historical Perspectives

- Children need to be filled with knowledge and culture – **Locke's Child**
- Free play and creative work is the center of pedagogical activity – **Rousseau's Child**
- Development is innate, biologically determined, following general laws (ages and stages) – **Piaget's Child**
- The child as co-constructor of knowledge, identity, and culture – **Vygotsky's Child**

Children are competent.

- Ready to learn
- Capable of constructing an identity, theories, hypotheses, and questions
- Creators, not consumers, in their learning and development



Children's curiosity and wonder are their way of making sense of and understanding their experiences.



The child's "why" is a research question not unlike the questions: "What is life?" "Why is life?"

Carlina Rinaldi

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PN-MjUC4f9k&ab_channel=JulianBurrett

Children are social.

Children are born searching for the meaning of the self in relation to others and to the world.

All children are born with the desire and capacity to form relationships.



Children develop in relationship to others.

Children's Worth is Incalculable

- Start with the unshakable belief that every child is a person of incredible value.
- Resist the alphabet of labels (e.g., ADD, at risk, lazy, slow, emotionally disturbed).
- Become a student of your children.
- Get to know them as persons.



Developmental Domains

- **Social & Emotional** (here we will split them into two domains – social and emotional)
 - Self-knowledge (self-esteem, meta cognition, sexual identity, ethic identity), moral reasoning, understanding and expression of emotions, self-regulation, temperament, understanding of others, interpersonal skills and friendships.
- **Cognitive**
 - Thought processes and intellectual abilities including attention, memory, problem solving, imagination, creativity, academic and everyday knowledge, and language.
- **Language**
 - Understanding and using language, both receptively (understanding what is said to them) and expressively (producing spoken or written language)
- **Motor**
 - Body size, body proportions, appearance, brain development, motor development, perception and physical health.
 - Fine motor = strength, endurance, dexterity and coordination of extremities
 - Gross motor = strength, endurance and coordination of core

How You Doin'? For Reflection

A primary challenge to caregiving professionals is to see each and every child as a three-dimensional human being with:

- hopes, dreams, aspirations, skills, and capacities;
- a body, a mind, a heart and a spirit;
- experiences, a past, a pathway, and a future.



Developmental Theory: A View from a Mountaintop

Theories provide different ways to look at and make sense of development.

Every theory is a reflection of the cultural values and belief systems of its time.



Cognition

- Experience is key!
- Critical periods + observe child for readiness/interest
 - Teach your baby to read! ?
- Assimilation & Accommodation
- Interest-motivation-ability-model



Power of Play

- Why play matters
 - Helps children learn roles, cooperation, and conflict resolution
 - Encompasses all domains
- All types of play have value!
 - Unoccupied
 - Solitary
 - Onlooker
 - Parallel
 - Associative
 - Cooperative



Play – Pathway to Learning



This is not a stick...

It's a wand
It's a guitar
It's a shovel
It's a horse
It's a baton
It's a telescope
It's a sword
It's a microphone
It's a ski pole
It's a spoon
It's a fishing pole
It's a treasure finder
It's a paddle.

and anything else a child can imagine!



WHEN CHILDREN PLAY WITH BLOCKS THEY ARE LEARNING

colors, size, shape, number, weight,
height, texture, balance, pattern,
order, classification, co-operation, co-
ordination, fine motor skills, story
telling, physics, collaboration, problem
solving, creative thinking, imagination,
area, length, width, space, sequencing,
trial and error, sorting, spatial
awareness, concentration, autonomy,
initiative, pretending, community,
negotiation, persistence, cause and
effect, directionality, divergent
thinking, logical reasoning, mapping,
measuring, fraction, addition,
subtraction, division, estimation,
simple machines, language, prediction,
experimentation, leadership,
construction, self-expression,
continuity and permanence.....

i AM IN PRESCHOOL

I am not built to
sit still,
keep my hands to myself,
take turns,
be patient,
stand in line,
or keep quiet
all of the time.

I need:
motion,
novelty,
adventure,
and to

engage the world with my whole body.

LET ME PLAY.

(Trust me, I'm learning!)

Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory ([develop leads learning](#))



- **Cognitive development is necessary for learning** – if we teach too much too soon or too fast, children will not learn effectively.
- Children need to be ready for school.



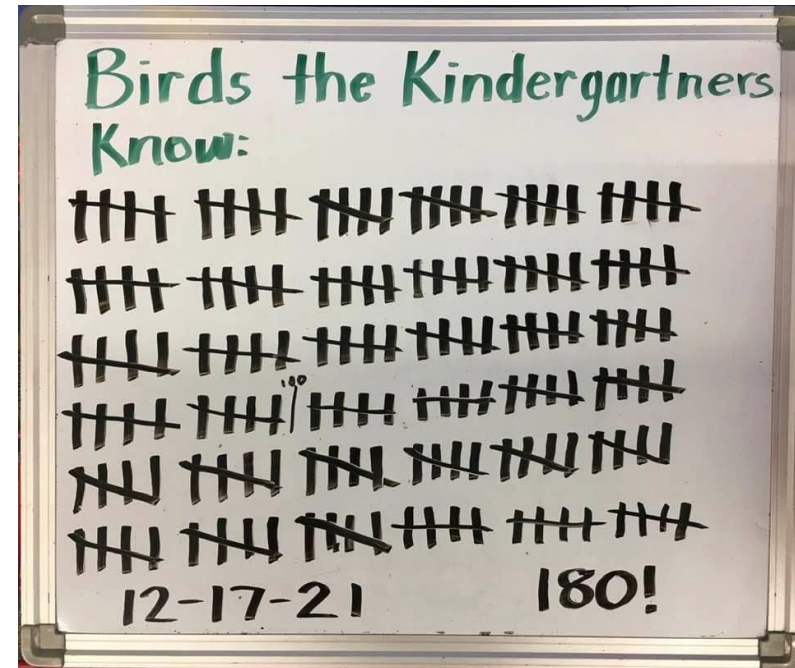
essential to
children.

Limitations of Piaget's Theory

Young children are competent in a wider range of abilities than Piaget's theory might lead one to believe.

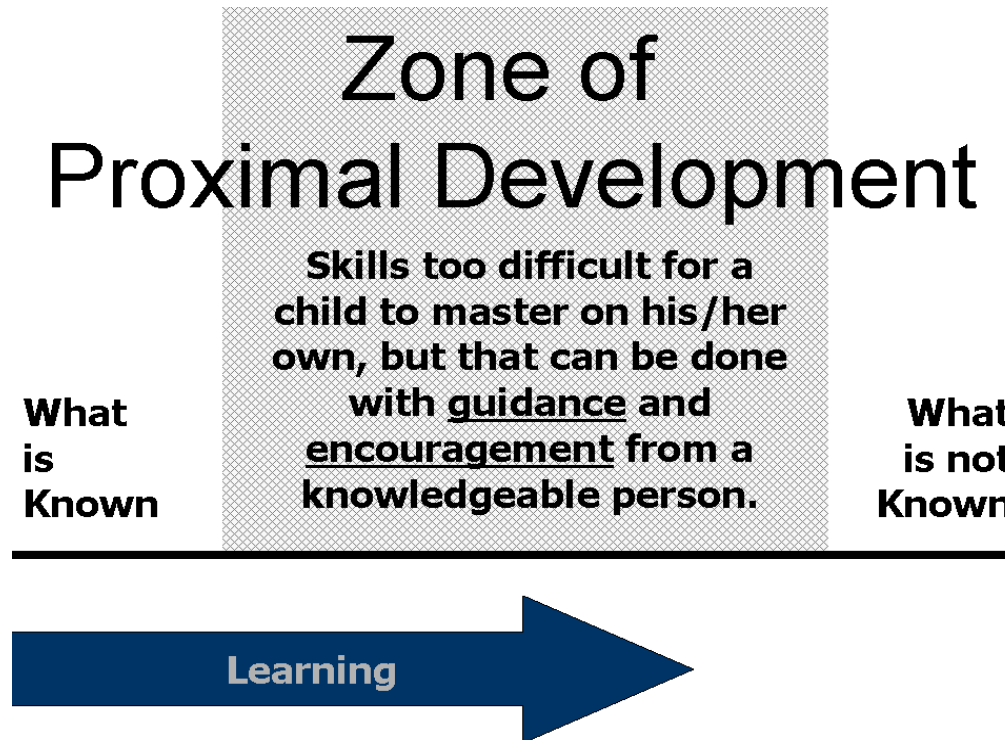
When given instruction, young children are ready to learn some rather complex concepts and skills.

Children cannot construct complex understandings based on independent exploration, free play, and discovery alone.



Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory

(learning leads development)



- Focus is on scaffolding skills and concepts that are just beyond the actual (observed) level of individual performance.
- Children are actively engaged in social interactions with adults and children of differing competencies.
- Children should be allowed to explore and discover, but systematic teaching of concepts and processes are possible.

What I can't do today, I can do tomorrow.



Scaffolding

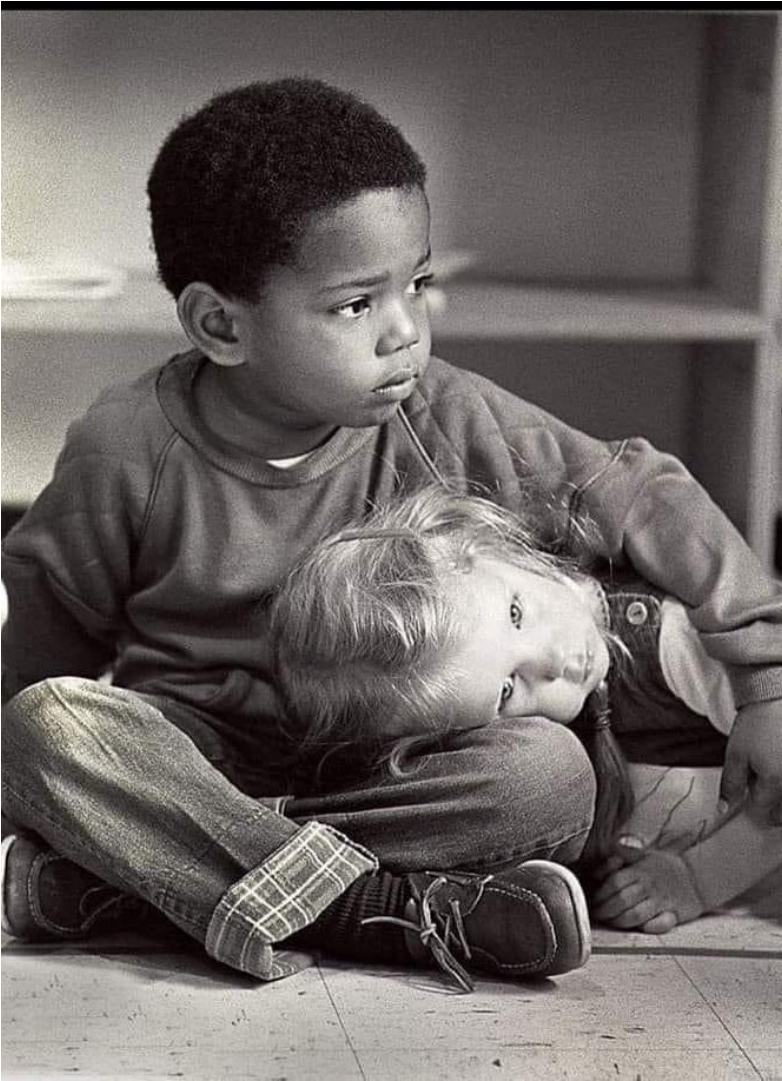
- Assisting a child to carry out a task beyond their capability (includes using language and vocabulary to foster thinking and problem solving).
- Varying the amount and type of assistance to fit the task and child's goals.
- Decreasing the level of assistance as the child takes more responsibility.
- Responsibility for performance is transferred to the child as the child learns.

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHyFTJCWdTA&ab_channel=ValerieFisher%28vjh007%29

Serve and Return



Elements of Scaffolding



Social & Emotional Development

Helping children to feel safe, valued, respected, supported, and connected.

<https://illinoiseearlylearning.org/videos/ielg-moments/moments-socdev/>

Rethinking norms....

- Forced affection
- No bad days
- Leaders/followers
- Being “on” all the time
- Forced engagement
- Forced apologies
- Children in public/behaviors

The Power of Relationships



- <https://www.edutopia.org/video/power-relationships-schools>
- Research shows that students who feel safe and supported by adults are better able to learn.

“Most of the experiences young children seek are legitimate and appropriate to their developmental levels. It is our responsibility to help them find acceptable ways to gain those experiences.”

Ann Clewett



Typical behaviors misunderstood

I'm hungry!

I'm tired!

I'm not
feeling well!

I need
attention!

I can't do it!

I'm angry or
frustrated!

A-Typical Social/Emotional Development –When to seek intervention

- Harmful behavior
 - Self injurious, physically dangerous to others
- Stereotypic behavior
 - Hand flapping, rocking, inappropriate shrieks
- Infrequent or absent desirable behavior
 - Not walking, crawling, or talking
- Normal behavior exhibited in inappropriate contexts
 - Private behaviors exhibited in public places

“

Every time you think of calling a kid 'attention-seeking' this year, consider changing it to 'connection-seeking' and see how your perspective changes.

— Dr. Jody Carrington

PSYCHOLOGIST

edutopia

Thinking of your child as
behaving badly
disposes you to think
of punishment.

Thinking of your child as
struggling to handle
something difficult
encourages you to help
them through their
distress

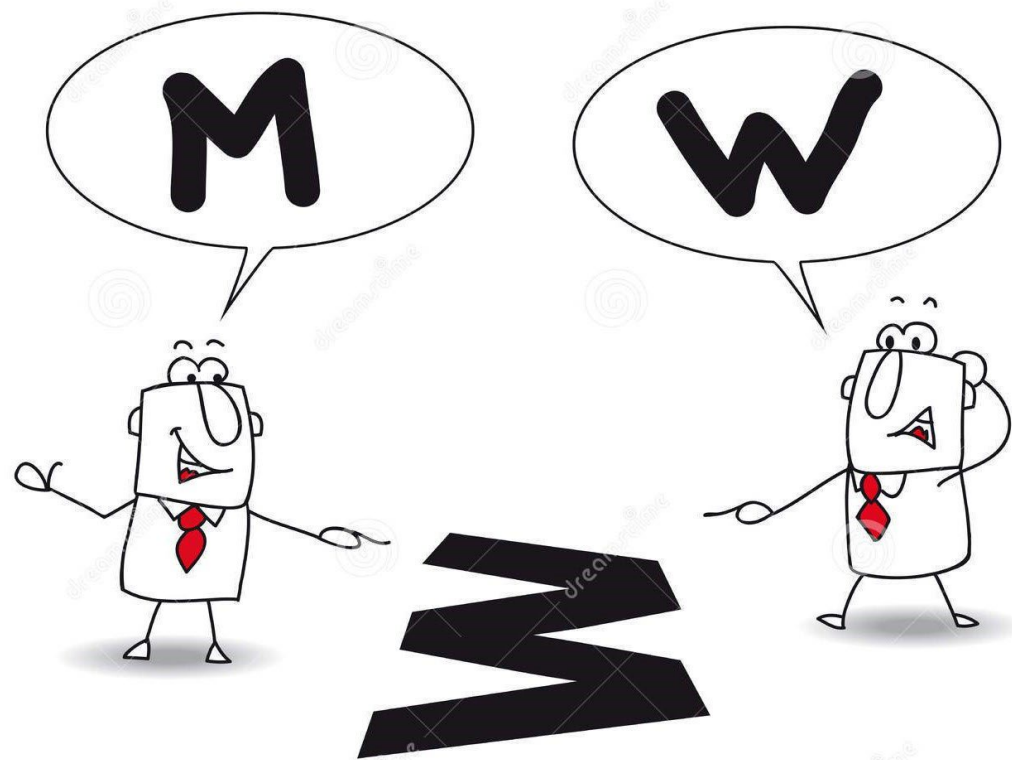
Wisdom from Vivian Paley

"I must not do to a child that which I would not have done to me. As my teaching errors have not been punishable by isolation, humiliation, and denial of activity, I would not impose these sentences upon the children." (*The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter*, p. 91)

Developing the Habit of Close Observation







The Importance of Listening

We spend about 45 percent of our time listening, but we are distracted, preoccupied, or forgetful about 75 percent of that time. Immediately after listening to someone talk, we usually recall only about half of what we've heard.



In responsive relationships, children are listened to and heard.

- What are they asking?
- What are they thinking about?
- What are their conversations revealing?



What Are We Looking For?

- How do children see things?
- What are children trying to do?
- How do they attempt to do it?
- We need to understand how children think and learn.



Let's Practice

- What do you notice?
- What areas of development do you notice?
- What do you wonder?
- What are these children trying to do?
- What strategies do they use?
- What may be their questions?

Call to Action

- We want you to feel connected, empowered, valued, respect, challenged and supported.
- Today I learned...
- Today I felt....
- This learning matters because...

For Next Time: What is Your View of the Family?

- **Make a list of your beliefs and values related to families?**
- **What does it mean to be family centered?**



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