DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 323 006 PS 019 004

AUTHOR Mattke, Thomas L.
TITLE The Preschool Teacher: Developmentally Oriented or Developmentally Appropriate?
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 37p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Basic Skills; Comparative Analysis; Definitions; Educational Objectives; Educational Philosophy; Educational Practices; Educational Testing; Guidelines, *Preschool Education; Program Design; *School Schedules; *Teacher Behavior; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Role; Teacher Student Relationship; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Developmentally Appropriate Programs; Program Characteristics

ABSTRACT

Based in the belief that many preschool programs have an orientation toward a developmental philosophy yet are not developmentally appropriate in program practices, this discussion contrasts developmentally and psychometrically oriented approaches, reviews literature on program design and children's needs, and provides guidelines in the areas of teacher behavior and daily schedule. Initial discussion, on conceptions of the learner, the learning process, knowledge, and the aims of education, contrasts a truly developmental approach with the psychometric approach predominant in the schools. A review of research compares outcomes of various preschool program designs and works toward a clearer definition of the developmental needs of the young child. Sections in the review focus on basic skills and teaching strategies, defining "developmentally appropriate," the teacher's role, and program structure and goals. Attention is then focused on implications of research on teacher behaviors and teacher-child interactions. An analysis of the daily schedule in a preschool classroom follows. Concluding discussion probes teacher behaviors within the framework of the daily schedule. It is pointed out that inappropriate teacher behaviors can destroy a daily routine that has been planned according to the needs of young children. And, an inappropriate daily schedule makes even the best and most knowledgeable teacher unable to facilitate learning from a child development perspective. (RH)

The Preschool Teacher: Developmentally Oriented or Developmentally Appropriate?

by

Thomas L. Mattke

The author is Coordinator of Head Start/Chapter 1 Preprimary Programs
Green Bay Area Public School District
Green Bay, Wisconsin

Developmentally Oriented or Appropriate?

Thomas L. Mattke
1224 S. Irwin
Green Bay, Wisconsin
54301

(414) 432-0400

ABSTRACT

Developmentally appropriate practice is the key issue in early childhood education today. Writers and researchers have provided classroom staff with guidance needed for implementation of this approach; however, the author believes that many preschool programs have an orientation toward a developmental philosophy, yet are not developmentally appropriate in program practices. This discussion provides guidelines in the areas of teacher behaviors and daily schedule, two components that are most resistant to change.

Educational philosophy is examined, contrasting a developmental approach with the prevailing practice in schools, a psychometric philosophy. Research is utilized to compare results of various preschool program designs and to more clearly define developmental needs of the young child.

Attention is then focused on implications of research, relative to teacher behaviors and teacher-child interactions. This is followed by an analysis of the daily schedule in a preschool classroom. Specific guidelines are given concerning both issues, as well as teacher behaviors during the various activities included in the daily routine.

THE PRESCHOOL TEACHER: DEVELOPMENTALLY ORIENTED

or DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE?

Developmentally appropriate practice is a key topic among early childhood educators as we begin this decade and look to the twenty-first century. The focus on which program design best serves young children has replaced questions concerning the value of preschool; there is agreement that a quality preschool experience has a strong influence on later school success. Credit for this must be given to the research and writings of those who are dedicated to preserving that period of human life known as early childhood. The challenge to all who work directly with young children or manage programs, is to use this knowledge and research to benefit those we teach. Preschool programs must not be designed to make adults comfortable, or to satisfy teachers and parents by directing children into experiences for the purpose of producing positive results on standardized tests. Rather, these classrooms must be safe havens that allow individuals to move forward according to each child's developmental clock, guided by caring adults who take direction from all that is known about child growth and development.

The purpose of this discussion is to examine research and writings relative to developmentally appropriate practice, concentrating on two critical areas of importance to teachers of four-year-olds:

1) Teacher behaviors, i.e., the quantity and quality of interaction between children and adults as an essential component of a developmentally appropriate pro-

gram. Failure to plan interactions and reflect upon one's teaching style will destroy the best of program intentions. Specifics to consider are physical positioning as it relates to teacher role, interactive responsibility of the teacher during each activity and utilization of other adults for maximum benefit to children.

2) The daily schedule provides the framework that supports all experiences that occur within the classroom. Developmental appropriateness of learning experiences is often reduced or negated by scheduling that is not in tune with intended outcomes. Key concerns include time allocated for large and small groups, acceptable transitions and proportion of the day necessary for experiential learning (free choice/play time).

It is important to contrast the developmental approach with the psychometric philosophy that is dominant in school today. The two philosophies are very different in four critical areas; comparisons are summarized from the work of Elkind (1989).

Conception of the Learner. A developmental philosophy views the child as having developing mental abilities. Differences in ability are seen as differences in rates of intellectual growth. The task for educators is to match the curricula to these developing abilities (developmentally appropriate practice).

The pyschometric philosophy sees the child as having measurable abilities. Differences in performance are viewed as reflecting differences in amount of intellectual ability. The task for edu-

cators is matching the child with others of similar ability (ability grouping).

Conception of the Learning Process. A developmental philosophy believes learning is a creative or constructive process. The learning process is interactive (with the content) and a new way to view the world emerges. Active learners are better able to transfer learning from one content area to another.

In contrast, the psychometric philosophy defines the learning process in terms of skill acquisition and decides for the learner how the skills will be approached. Educators concentrate on teaching content to the child; the process and content are seen as independent of each other.

Conception of Knowledge. The developmental perspective considers knowledge to be a construction, formed jointly by learner and content. The reality created for a young child is very different than that of an older child or adult. It is important to value that reality, not label it right or wrong. The learner grows in competence and initiative becoming prepared for later more complex thought.

A psychometric point of view holds that knowledge is something a child acquires; it can be measured independently from the acquisition process. This defines knowledge as being "right" or "wrong," and does not make a distinction between fundamental knowledge (which is constructed on one's own) and derived knowledge (which others construct and must be acquired second hand). Learning facts is valued in this philosophy.

Conception of the Aims of Education. Developmental education strives to facilitate the child's drive to understand the world through creative activity. The idea is to create students who want to know.

Psychometric education desires to produce children who score high on achievement tests; the aim is to maximize the acquisition of measurable knowledge and skills. The idea is to produce students who know what we want.

This writer urges educators to explore this philosophical issue in more depth. The work of Elkind (1989), from which this information was obtained, is an excellent place to begin.

Certain teaching styles can be connected to either the developmental or psychometric approach. A teacher will sometimes profess a developmental philosophy yet adopt behaviors more appropriate to the psychometric approach. For clarity, it is important to briefly define terms that will be utilized in this discussion.

Teacher-directed refers to program design or lesson format in which the teacher decides what will be learned, how it will be accomplished and when the activity occurs. Direct instruction utilizes a didactic approach and is lecture/demonstration oriented, with an emphasis on pencil and paper tasks (worksheets). Questions usually are factual with only one right answer.

Child-initiated refers to program design that allows children to select activities from a variety of choices presented by the teacher. Materials and activities are chosen according to the observed needs of the children, not a predetermined set of skills. Non-didactic teaching is characterized by active learning, a teacher

who facilitates and guides rather than "teaches lessons," and an emphasis in problems that do not have one right answer.

What Research Tells Us About Program Design

Research has not clearly identified one specific program design as the most effective for all young children. Direct instruction has produced short-term gains in I.Q. scores, while child-initiated approaches seem to produce long-term prosocial behaviors (Schweinhart, L. J. & Weikart, D. P., 1988). Boys who were enrolled in a non-didactic preschool program were found to exhibit superior school achievement through eighth grade while girls from didactic programs did better in eighth grade reading but not in math (Powell, 1987). Other studies rate present and former participants of various preschool programs according to I.Q. gains, academic performance through the elementary grades, social skills, problem solving abilities and other areas. Conflicting evidence abounds. Lilian Katz (1987) explains that the weak data base in early childhood education exists partly because children are developing so rapidly at this period of their lives, making it difficult to separate growth that is due to programs from growth that is part of the maturational process. Additionally, proponents of conflicting preschool models attack opposing research as incomplete, questionable due to small sample populations or flawed methodology.

The issue does not have to be centered on which curriculum or teaching style produces the best "product." Rather, it is developing human beings who do not need to be put together into a final product while in our care. Preschool children (indeed, all children) are "works in progress," and the experiences preschool offers serve

as an opportunity to grow and develop. The notion that each instructional year must yield a "finished product" who has acquired a predetermined set of skills from September to June is, in this writer's opinion, a major failing of the overall educational system in our country. It is especially unacceptable when applied to preschoolers. The task is better defined as utilizing what we do know about the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of young children and designing approaches for facilitating growth that pay attention to how children learn naturally.

Much work has been completed toward the achievement of this task. It is not necessary to go back to the writings of Dewey, Montessori, Piaget or Erikson in their original form. The field of child development and learning includes volumes of research and writings that both build on the aforementioned work and break new ground; knowledge of the field provides sufficient guidance to meet our curriculum planning needs and direction for teaching style.

Basic Skills and Teaching Strategies

What are the basics for young children? Katz (1987) identifies four types of learning goals that preschool programs should address: knowledge, skills, dispositions and feelings. Knowledge is broadly defined as ideas, concepts, facts and information. Skills include gross and fine motor functions and other small units of behavior that are observable, as well as less easily measured mental processes such as the development of representational abilities. Feelings deal with the emotional struggle young children experience as they cope with temporary behaviors such as anger and sadness; additionally, the general issues of developing a sense of

belonging, competence and independence are important to the preschool child. Dispositions are habits of mind or characteristic ways of responding to experience; examples are curiosity, cooperativeness, perseverance and empathy (Katz, 1987).

Katz is joined by others in her outline of these specific learning goals for preschoolers. Elkind (1988) includes all of these areas under the headings of skills and knowledge, emphasizing social-skill dispositions such as completing a task and taking turns. In earlier writing, Elkind (1981) discussed the concept of helping children learn and adapt to the social environment by providing "mediated learning experiences." These teacher actions and modeling assist children in developing vital dispositions such as patience, attention and staying on task. Tarnay (1965) does not use the same categories as Elkind and Katz but the list of intended learnings is similar to Honig (1980), who emphasizes the importance of dispositions and feelings such as cooperation, independence, making choices, learning to trust adults and developing language necessary for self expression. All of these goals point to a concern with the social/emotional growth that is a necessary precedent to academic skills.

Whether one is working from a developmental perspective or planning a lesson using a direct instruction model, that planning reflects an acceptance of the idea that strategies must take into account the ability of the learner. However, there are educators who propose that academic tasks be presented to young children as early as preschool. This writer finds this formalization of instruction in the preschool to be unacceptable and potentially damaging to

children. Those who seek to formalize instruction in reading, math and other academic areas do so without providing "comparable evidence of change in what young children need for optimal develoment" (Bredekamp, 1987). The evidence seems to suggest that such formalization of instruction is harmful. Elkind (1986) warns that formal instruction puts excessive demands on young children that cause stress, affecting learning and motivation. Katz (1987) asserts that preschool programs that emphasize academics tend to use a single teaching method and curriculum. This homogeneous treatment of a group of young children of diverse developmental levels and backgrounds guarantees that many of them are likely to fail. This causes feelings of incompetence (Katz (1987) calls it "learned stupidity") that could negatively affect other areas of development. Hirsh-Pasek, et al. (1989) find "no advantage to accelerating the learning environments of preschool children" after observing gains that disappeared within one year and children from academic preschools who exhibit test anxiety, less creativity and less positive attitudes toward school. If stressing academics does not benefit children in the long-term and measurably harms some, it seems logical to abandon this approach. It seems to use unconsenting children as subjects in questionable classroom experiments.

One must look again at what is known about young children. Piaget (1950) places four-year-olds in the preoperational stage of development, a time when abstract learning is yet to come and direct contact with the environment is the key to constructing concepts. For example, a didactic approach to teaching about different types of houses would entail the whole group viewing study

prints of homes, apartment houses and duplexes. A preoperational child needs to get out and walk through the neighborhood for true learning about these differences to take place. Erikson (1950) theorizes that preschool children are striving to develop a sense of autonomy, and later, a sense of initiative. Academic preschools that use direct instruction thwart the child's efforts toward both of these necessary dispositions.

Even preschools that claim to use child-initiated, individualized activities to teach academics sometimes undermine this development if the teacher or program decides what is to be learned and completely controls the materials, environment and learning activity. The child learns what to produce and when it is acceptable. Autonomy suffers the most because very little real choice is involved.

Basic skills for preschool children, then, are not achieved by formalizing instruction through the downward extension of the three R's; rather, they involve feelings, behaviors and the desire to learn about the world. Concentrating on skills alone, and defining them from the point of view of an older child, is ignoring what we know about child development.

Defining "Developmentally Appropriate"

Those who insist that young children be pushed prematurely into reading and math instruction seem to view education as a race. It is not a race; rather, education is a journey that continues through adulthood. The preschool years constitute the very early stage of the journey when a pace best suited to the individual must be established. Too fast a start leaves the traveler unable or unwilling

to continue. Lack of support and preparation causes the traveler to lose interest. Each traveler must find the pace best suited for that individual.

The preschool teacher must be concerned with helping each child grow and develop at an optimal individual pace; this is the straightforward description of developmentally appropriate. Put simply, the two dimensions involved are age appropriateness and individual appropriateness (Bredekamp, 1987). Age appropriateness requires knowledge of the sequences of growth that occur across all areas of development. Individual appropriateness requires awareness of each child's abilities, personality, learning style and family background. The two dimensions are combined in program development and planning. This definition, and the guidelines for designing a program that is true to this philosophy, are contained in an excellent resource published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), edited by Bredekamp (1987). Drawing its rationale and recommendations from research, this NAEYC guide provides an outline for comprehensive preschool programs that are experientially based, developmentally sound and that contain child-initiated/teacher supported play as a key ingredient of the curriculum.

Further Assistance Is Needed

This writer believes many preschool children are being subjected to inappropriate and rigid classroom practices that will turn them off to school and prevent them from developing independent, self-motivated learning styles. This fear has been substantiated both by personal observations and the reports of Elkind (1986), Katz (1987), Curry (1990), Hirsh-Pasek, et al. (1989), Zigler (1987)

and others. Hough, Nurses and Goodson, reported in Rogers (1987), that four-year-olds in the centers they studied spent most of their time in large groups. Mitchell, citing her own survey of public and private preschools (Mitchell and Modigliani, 1989), observed that many programs sounded developmentally appropriate on paper but in practice "in no way resembled the written philosophy." Most distressing to this writer have been personal communications with Head Start directors who report classroom environments that are teacher-directed, worksheet or product-oriented and utilize mostly whole group activities. Quay and Jarrett (1986) observed 159 low income Head Start children who had fewer opportunities for social interchange and verbal communication with teachers than the middle income children in the study. Additionally, teachers engaged themselves in conversation with other adults or in preparation of bulletin boards and other projects during class time, without involving the children. These situations exist despite the Head Start Performance Standards (Office of Child Development Services, 1984) that mandate a developmentally appropriate classroom component.

Why do preschool centers staffed with caring early childhood educators fail to provide developmentally appropriate programs for young children, given the resources and research available? Some believe in the value of direct instruction, while others choose to ignore research implications in favor of personal preference. Conversations with teachers have led this writer to conclude that many do believe their programs are developmentally appropriate when this is only partially the case. The programs are not developmentally appropriate; however, the teachers are "developmentally oriented."

For example, most preschools incorporate a period of play into their daily schedule with the understanding that play is an important mode of learning for young children (Elkind, 1988). However, this part of the day may be too short or too carefully controlled by the teacher to be of value, negating the possibility of extended play. Many programs have appropriate wooden blocks available but the area for their use is too small for proper exploration. Teachers may limit the time spent in a large group to ten minutes, yet conduct four whole group activities within a two hour period. A gym time or large muscle activity may be offered each classroom day but it is frequently a whole group game that allows little individual physical activity. These are illustrations of a developmental orientation that do not satisfy developmentally appropriate criteria.

Preschool teachers work in a stressful environment, due to the nature of their work as well as pressures from parents, administrators and the public. Assimilating the total concept of developmentally appropriate practice is a difficult enough task; taking the next step and making meaningful changes in existing program content requires further assistance. General guidance is available; specific information and guidelines, that assist teachers as they reflect on current practices and make changes that benefit young children, are needed.

Role of the Teacher

In a developmentally appropriate program, interactions with children and the role of the teacher throughout the classroom day must not be based on the comfort level or preference of that teacher. Certainly, all interactions will be affected by individual

personalities; however, the frequency and nature of adult-child contacts and the physical placement of the teacher in relationship to the children must be determined by the developmental levels and individual needs within each group. Everything the teacher does must be driven by knowledge of child development and observation of individual differences.

This does not mean that a different activity is made available for each child in the classroom. It does mean, however, that materials and activities are chosen on the basis of flexibility for use on various levels. Additionally, the teacher or other adult is present for the purpose of encouraging exploration, creativity and acknowledging each child's efforts. For example, following a field trip to a greenhouse the construction area (art area, creative corner) has a variety of materials available for making flowers. This includes construction paper of all colors, straws, styrofoam pieces, bottle caps, tissue paper, scissors, glue, paste and many other materials. The activity is introduced as the experience is recalled, and what flowers the children remember--colors, types, sizes and other attributes--are shared verbally. The materials, combined with adult guidance, allow for work to be on the level of each child.

Compare this scenario with one in which all children are instructed in a group to use art materials to make a flower some time during free play. An example is already posted or a demonstration is provided. Children select brown paper for the pot, green for the stems and leaves, and then chooses the color of "their" flower from three or four available choices. Teacher-child interation

is reduced to the adult giving directions, reminding each child of the steps involved and complimenting finished products. Children in this group have been robbed of their initiative and autonomy. They have been taught that learning and school have little to do with their own ambitions; rather, both involve following directions and producing something for adults. Those in the group who have less developed skills receive the message that they are not competent when the issue may simply be one of maturation. It doesn't matter; once learned, the feelings of failure may affect school success for many years.

Similar examples can be given for activities in the block corner, writing center, water table and dramatic play area as well as for snack time, gross motor experiences, music and storytime. The issue is not <u>what</u> is planned because providing a movement experience or materials to make a flower are appropriate choices for young children. The issue is <u>how</u> each activity is carried out and what role the teacher or other adult has during the time children are engaged in the activity.

Program Structure and Goals

For a program to be developmentally appropriate, two basic elements must be present: most activities are child-initiated and the teacher's role is that of a facilitator or guide (Bredekamp, 1987). Even if the best age-level materials are combined with model developmentally appropriate activities, the result will be an inappropriate experience for young children if the above two criteria are not satisfied.

Child-initiated activities allow the motivation to learn to come from within the individual. Self-selected experiences are

purposeful (of meaning to the learner) and turn over a portion of control to the child (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1988). Schweinhart (1988) emphasizes that parents surveyed by Alwin prefer children to be independent and self-reliant and business leaders want employees to be self-disciplined, able to learn and responsible. How do schools expect to encourage the development of those dispositions if children are told what to learn, how to learn and (perhaps the most damaging) that knowledge is only received from an adult? Learning becomes a passive experience.

Direct instruction has a very small role in a developmentally appropriate program. Interaction that places the teacher in front of the whole group accounts for a small portion of the day. Children work individually or in small groups most of the time. For these reasons, the teacher must be available to move freely throughout the room acting as a facilitator and interacting individually with children.

The final issue in determining appropriate teacher behaviors and daily schedule, is the question of program goals. The four categories presented by Katz (1987), and defined earlier in this discussion, summarize possible goals of a developmentally appropriate preschool program. The specific knowledge and skills to be explored are defined by the children, staff and parents of each program, using sound child development information as a guide. It is feelings and dispositions, in the opinion of this writer, that stand above all else as the two areas of learning that are most important for young children.

The preschool years do serve as preparation for the formal

schooling that begins at age six. The unfortunate conclusion has been reached by many educators and others that this preparation must take the shape of academic endeavors (or pre-academic/readiness work, which often is formal schooling in disguise). The preschool years are a time when human beings prepare, but the preparation is for life, not the narrow part of growing up that consists of academic work in schools. Learning is not confined to reading and math, social studies and science or even the arts. Learning includes discovering who you are as a person, how to communicate and form relationships with others and the development of habits (or dispositions) that will serve you throughout a lifetime.

Attention to dispositions and feelings must have priority status in all preschools. Schweinhart and Weikart (1988) refer to dispositions such as developing a sense of language, expressing ideas, cooperating and sharing as the basic skills of the preoperational period. Elkind (1988) includes paying attention, following instructions, taking turns and completing a task as ingredients of the core curriculum in preschool. Katz (1987) values curiosity, generousity, interest in becoming a reader, the desire to use acquired skills, social competence and interest in outside activities or concerns (intrinsic motivation). Honig (1980) adds trust in adults and an independent desire to make choices. One could go on for some time with this list; the point is that all of these dispositions are valuable for success in later school years. Young children will develop these positive traits and attitudes in an environment that is designed with their mode of learning and and growth and development needs as a guide.

Feelings are closely tied to successful development of dispositions that affect later school success. Erikson's (1950) stages of personality development show that preschoolers are struggling to realize a sense of initiative between the ages of three and five. Program designs that do not take this into consideration may handicap a child who is seeking to establish the feelings of competence that lead to a sense of initiative. Preschool teachers tell parents at a conference about the importance of giving children choices and responsibilities, so that feelings of independence can emerge; yet, this is not done in many classrooms. Certainly, having a child be the "helper of the day" or assigning "leaders" for various projects acknowledges this need. However, in a situation where a child is away from the security of home and adjusting to a complex social unit, the entire classroom experience must be designed to encourage feelings of competence and independence. This is not something that is learned through whole-group discussion, following a teacher-read story (although, such a planned experience can contribute to the process); it must be a natural part of the total classroom environment.

Children are also learning to deal with emotions and need assistance in appropriate means of expression. A preschool classroom can provide an accepting environment in which to learn how to handle anger, sadness, fear, apprehension, excitement and other feelings that are difficult for young children. If one does not gain a sense of control over feelings and emotions, the expectations of formal schooling will be more of a struggle than is necessary.

Negative dispositions and feelings become harder to change as

children get older. Personal experiences of this writer as a preschool, kindergarten and first/second grade teacher have convinced him that children who reach elementary school without an inner drive to learn, lack skills needed for positive peer interaction and become dependent on the teacher for constant guidance. These children do not demonstrate control over their emotions, and experience multiple learning problems. One of the most devastating, in terms of school success, is an inability to stay on task. Time on task, and work habits in general, are powerful predictors of academic success (Stipek, 1983). Teachers sometimes report that a child has an "attitude problem;" a closer look might reveal that many children, even as young as six, do not believe their efforts would have effect on school success. These are not children who give up altogether; they just do not feel competent and learn to accept failure as their fate. Walden and Ramey (1983) found evidence that a belief in personal control over academic success is a good predictor of achievement. Personal observations, combined with research results, make a strong case for taking into account the development of dispositions and feelings in preschool program design.

Benefits of a carefully designed program, appropriate materials and developmentally appropriate activities are negated by teachers who pay tribute to the developmental approach but fail to embrace teaching behaviors that support it. Researchers have reported this finding (Mitchell & Modigliani, 1989), as well as observing teachers from "good quality programs" who structure ac-

tivities in ways that are not appropriate; this caused group management problems that could have been avoided by careful planning (McAfee, 1985).

Most preschool teachers are developmentally oriented to some degree; this may be in classroom materials and environment, interactions with children or in the way parts of the curriculum are planned and implemented. In order for children to fully benefit, all components that demonstrate a commitment need to be present. The teacher has a prominent role in the success of goals related to feelings and dispositions. This responsibility includes determining adult-child interactions and a daily schedule that fosters individual growth.

Teacher Behaviors and Teacher-Child Interactions

Information and research have been presented in this discussion for establishing a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate in the selection of knowledge and skills relevant for four-year-olds. Research implications have also been combined with knowledge of the field to make teachers aware of their responsibilities in maintaining a developmentally appropriate philosophy. A young child's mode of learning demands an interactive environment; this can only exist if the teacher is available for guidance, discussion, support and as a model for cognitive and social learning.

Problem-finding and problem-solving skills are excellent for illustrating appropriate teacher behaviors. Within the context of play/experiential learning situations, children will encounter problems such as how to enter an established play group or which materials to use to make a card for someone special. Tegano, Sawyers & Moran (1989) observed the need to help children define

and structure problems prior to solving them. Indeed, a child who stands staring at three others busily building with blocks may not see the situation as a problem to be logically solved. Failure of the teacher to provide guidance in defining (finding) the problem and assistance with developing skills to solve it, is a lost opportunity for growth and may promote a negative disposition of helplessness in social or decision-making situations.

It is clear that the development of both social skills and cognitive processes require availability of the teacher throughout the classroom day. Stressing the importance of extended conversations between teachers and young children, Rogers (1987) emphasizes the social and cognitive growth this interaction yields. Williams and Kamii (1986), in their explanation of the "mental action" that occurs when children are manipulating objects, list ways teachers can encourage thinking. All require the movement of the teacher throughout the room, not frequent whole group lessons or activities.

Literature seems to suggest that whatever goals in the areas of skills and knowledge are selected, the teacher acts as a facilitator, available on a one-to-one or small group basis. Goals that involve feelings and dispositions require the same teacher behaviors. Young children need to experience feelings of competence, an attitude of independence and a belief they are in control of their own success (Honig, 1980; Stipek, 1982; Walden & Ramey, 1983; Tegano, Sawyers & Moran, 1989; Elkind, 1988; Fagot, 1973). Such dispositions and feelings are not learned in a specific center or through the use of a particular set of materials; rather, they are

products of structure that reflect program philosophy. Child-initated activities, choices, ample time for play, few whole group lessons and a psychologically safe environment that rewards risk taking are part of this structure. The same is true for developing young learners who are motivated from within, rather than expecting the teacher to tell them when and what to learn. A preschool classroom that values such a disposition is organized so that few teacher-directed activities take place.

In a developmentally appropriate program, an abundance of opportunities exist for teacher-child interactions; these are often child-initiated (Bredekamp, 1987). In order to encourage adult-child contacts and enhance the development of desirable feelings and dispositions, these interactions are frequent and spontaneous. Additional adults in the classroom--parents, classroom aides and volunteers--interact informally in much the same way as the teacher. It is the teacher's responsibility to monitor these adult-child contacts and assist the adult in appropriate questioning, listening and other techniques that are benefical for children. The teacher is not the only source of guidance in the preschool classroom. The image of a teacher seated in front of the whole group while a classroom aide (or maid?) cleans tables or puts notes in schoolbags should be replaced by an image of a classroom team, interacting with children throughout the room.

Teachers do not remain in one place, making it necessary for children to interrupt play and leave an area in order to ask a question or relate information. Movement is the key to adult-child interaction, classroom management, supervision of other adults and

providing equitable contacts for all types of learners.

Another advantage of multiple teacher-child contacts is the opportunity to develop warm, friendly, natural relationships. Affective orientation, formed during the preschool years, "is very important to determining later development" (Karnes, Johnson and Beauchamp, 1988). A preschool classroom must be a model, in terms of being a nurturing environment for young children.

In the area of developing positive feelings, dispositions and social skills, nurturing environments have been shown to be successful. Thompson, and Tzelepis, Giblin & Agronow, both described in Lay-Dopyera & Dopyera (1987), found that friendly, helpful teachers and less restrictive adult-child contacts lead to competent and constructive children who demonstrate more complex peer interactions and remain on task longer than children from less affective environments.

Preschool teachers know children they serve learn in very different ways than those in elementary school. This knowledge affects all aspects of program design; the issue of how the teacher behaves and where the teacher is positioned during the class day may be the most vital. Dewey (1915) decried the rows of desks in elementary schools as "all made for listening--because simply studying lessons out of a book is only another kind of listening; it marks the dependency of one mind upon another" (p.31). There is little difference between worksheets done at tables and studying done at desks. Children sitting quietly at desks as the teacher talks or a "discussion" takes place are not very different from a class of preschoolers sitting on the rug, "learning" in a whole group.

More specific suggestions and information will follow the discussion of daily schedule. It is important, at this point, to examine when activities occur in a preschool classroom. Teacher behaviors will then be described within the context of that daily routine.

Daily Schedule

Routines are essential for young children as they provide a sense of power and control. Elkind (1976) compares the learning of a daily routine to constructing concepts, noting that "once you have them they operate automatically and save the trouble of accommodating anew to each novel situation" (p.235). Although the schedule is crucial to the success of a developmentally appropriate program, it is the last planning that is conducted. Needs of the children within each specific group and the guiding philosophy determine the daily framework or structure. Children are not fit into an established schedule or routine; rather, the routine is adjusted according to the needs of the children.

An example is the widely used whole group activity referred to in many programs as "circle time." Included during this time are activities such as show and tell, calendar, roll call, music and movement, stories, planning and review, discussion, lessons and demonstrations, fingerplays and dramatizations. This writer has spoken with many teachers who are concerned with the behavior of one or more of their classes during this time, yet very few consider altering the structure or eliminating circle time with those groups; these teachers see the problem simply as children with a short attention span or other behavior difficulties being experi-

enced by individuals who disrupt the group.

McAfee (1985) observed similar attitudes among 35 teachers who reported that the range of children appropriately attending during group time was 50% to 88%. Reasons for this inattentive behavior were seen by the teachers as beyond their control 75% of the time; the other 25% included the need for better training of assistants, helping individual children learn appropriate group behavior and activities that were not suited for the levels of the children. McAfee concluded that this group of teachers were "largely unaware that they can plan and implement activities that are more appropriate to the age, developmental level, or social functioning of the group."

This example is central to the discussion of daily schedule in a developmentally appropriate program. Teachers do an injustice to children by assuming past practice is acceptable simply because it has always seemed to work well in their classroom. In order to fully embrace the idea that child development research and theory will determine program design so that developmentally appropriate practice becomes a reality, daily routines must be evaluated by the same standards as other program components. McAfee (1985) states, "It is questionable whether calendar, weather, and show and tell, even with some variations, can be equally appropriate for children ages 3, 4, 5 and 6." This writer believes that some of these activities are not appropriate for most groups and need to be drastically changed in format and time (from the traditional teacher-directed, fifteen minute experience) to be appropriate even for four-five-and six-year-old children. The same evaluation and

modification must be done with all elements of the daily routine.

One learning strategy that this writer believes all teachers of four-, five- and six-year-olds must include in the daily routine is some form of a plan-do-review process. The High/Scope Foundation has given so much to the early childhood community; their research, theory and guidance has contributed immensely toward rising acceptance of the importance of a quality preschool experience. The planning process, an integral part of the their "cognitively oriented curriculum" (Hohmann, 1979), is an extremely valuable tool for facilitating the development of necessary skills and dispositions in young children.

Many preschool programs operate two hour class sessions. The specific High/Scope model of the plan-do-review process (Hohmann, 1979, P.61-72) does not, in the opinion of this writer, have to be utilized in order to satisfy the criteria of being developmentally appropriate. Rather, a shorter version can be implemented by individual teachers or programs. For example, each area (blocks, puzzles/games, water table) is labeled with a simple picture that a child can easily reproduce. Immediately before experiential learning time (more accurately descriptive than free time or play time), each child takes a 4 inch by 11 inch strip of paper and prints/traces their name at the top; adults assist, as needed. The child selects areas in which to play, draws the symbols for those areas on the paper and hangs it on the planning board beneath their name and photograph. During review time, immediately following experiential learning, each child circles those areas used and recalls specifics of the experiences with an adult and other children.

The planning process described is only an outline and can be modified; however, the areas must be selected by the child and it is important that the plan be "written," as much as possible, by each child. Making copies of a master planning sheet and having children merely check areas utilized is not acceptable; doing the plan is part of the learning. One important point must be made; this writer incorporated such a system of planning, with variations dictated by group and individual needs, into the daily routine of four-year-old Head Start children for six years; very positive results were observed. Three-year-olds, however, are not yet able to represent areas and experiences in a complete enough manner to justify such an activity.

Planning gives children a sense of control over adults and the environment, and is child-initiated by design. Children who have difficulty focusing and attending to a task are more able to organize their play when prior thought has been given to each activity. Changes in plans are accepted as part of the process. In addition to the positive dispositions developed, the planning process is a non-threatening method of enhancing emerging reading and writing skills. Children also benefit by increasing representational competence, their understanding that ideas, feelings and thoughts can be transformed from one medium to another (Sigel, 1987).

Feelings and dispositions that constitute what Schweinhart and Weikart (1988) termed the basic skills of the properational period, many of which were detailed earlier in this discussion, fall under two general categories. First, are those related to a child's quest to achieve a sense of autonomy and initiative; these include independence, self-confidence, a sense of power in relationships, curi-

osity and feelings of being in control of or 's success or failure. Second, are those involved with relationships; these are language and communication skills, cooperation, interest in activities outside of oneself and learning to trust other children and adults.

In order to plan for children's needs, it is apparent that a daily routine must contain frequent opportunities for children to interact with each other and with adults. An environment that values specific activities in which a child is engaged, and provides the teacher sufficient time and a natural setting in which to observe and extend learning, is needed. When these requirements are combined with what is known about how young children acquire skills and knowledge, a general outline begins to emerge.

The following is based on a two-hour class session; all times are flexible. Longer sessions would require adjusting each period to reflect a similar proportion for each component of the preschool day. Programs of more than two hours will be able to provide a longer planning and recall time or lengthen experiential learning.

Arrival: Five (5) minutes.

Planning Time: Fifteen (15) minutes.

Experiential Learning: Sixty (60) minutes. This is uninterrupted play. Includes clean-up time.

Recall/Snack Time: Fifteen (15) minutes. One adult facilitates discussion with five to seven children.

Whole Group Activities: Twenty (20) minutes maximum per day. This includes gross motor, music, movement, story and all others combined; these may be split in a variety of ways. For example, a ten minute music time may precede planning (encouraging use of instruments during Experiential Learning), and a ten-minute story may follow Recall/Snack.

Dismissal: Five (5) minutes.

The suggested daily schedule reflects what is developmentally appropriate, according to research and theory in the field today. Many of the "lessons" presented in a whole group format by preschool teachers are not necessary and the formal way these are "taught" ignores all we know about young children. Goals involving knowledge and skills can be reached using centers that appeal to a child's need to use emerging mental abilities, a drive Elkind (1988) calls the structural imperative. Whole group instruction in skills need not be included in the daily schedule. This does not mean, however, that whole group time cannot be used to provide information, using developmentally appropriate methods, on issues that are considered critical locally. These include issues such as sexual abuse prevention, fire safety and similar topics that follow a predetermined format or require an outside resource person to come into the classroom.

The daily schedule has room for a variety of experiences to occur. One must remember that the purpose of a schedule or routine is not to keep a teacher's eye on the clock; rather, it is to remind staff that young children work best in a repetitive setting and have specialized learning strategies that are quite different from older children.

Teacher Behaviors Relative to the Daily Schedule

Inappropriate teacher behaviors can destroy a daily routine planned according to the needs of young children. An inappropriate daily schedule makes even the best and most knowledgeable teacher unable to facilitate learning from a child development perspective. These two elements must operate in concert with one another, and be joined by carefully selected materials, physical environ-

ment and activities, for children to fully benefit. What follows, are specific instructions to teachers concerning behaviors exhibited during each period of the daily schedule. Emphasis is placed on where the teacher is positioned, relative to the children.

Planning Time Children will most likely begin planning before all have arrived; this staggers the adult assistance, reducing pressure on all helping with the process. The teacher circulates among the planners, assisting those in need, extending thought and language through appropriate questions. Other adults do the same.

Experiential Learning Contacts are made with children in small groups and individually as the teacher moves throughout the room. The teacher does not have total responsibility for discipline, unless absolutely necessary due to staff structure. Spontaneous child-adult conversations occur, extending the child's language through careful listening and positive questions. Attempts are not made to convert every play situation into an opportunity to teach a concept. The teacher observes and takes notes; this is a valuable part of Experiential Learning time. Adults act as facilitators for learning, whether the contact is with one child or a group of three or four. Assistants and volunteers may be assigned to one area or move throughout the room, depending on their expertise. All adults assist with clean up as part of the philosophy to stay actively involved with the flow of the day. A smooth transition into snack/recall time is facilitated, so that children are not waiting in a group for the next thing to "happen to them." Wait times, no matter when they occur, should not exceed three minutes.

Recall/Snack The teacher facilitates a recall group and is

responsible for monitoring all others.

Whole Group Activities Responsibility for facilitating these activities is shared with other adults, if possible. This is one time when group control depends on the teacher. Remain in front of the group; assistants and volunteers are placed throughout the group and expected to model appropriate group behaviors. Transition techniques are selected that hold the interest of all involved.

Dismissal The teacher moves throughout the group as they prepare to depart, reminding them to share their plan and/or memories with those at home. Future activities may be mentioned, building interest for the next school day. Adults listen for clues concerning activities that are of high interest; these may be incorporated into future plans. This is a time for individual contacts that extend thinking and encourage positive feelings and competence.

Developmentally Oriented or Appropriate?

The quantity of information available concerning developmentally appropriate practice is extensive. This is an exciting time for early childhood educators and should be the beginning of major improvements in the quality of programs serving young children.

Guidelines provided in this discussion touched on two areas this writer believes are the most resistant to change in early childhood programs, teacher behaviors and daily schedule. It is critical that all aspects of the experiences planned for young children be examined by teachers and program managers.

The challenge for all early childhood professionals is to ask the question: Am I developmentally oriented or developmen-

tally appropriate in all program conponents? This question is vital for the future of young children; what they learn about themselves today will determine how learning is approached throughout their lifetime.

References

Bredekamp, S. (Ed.). (1987). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Curry, N. E. (1990). Presentation to the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. Young Children, 45(3), 17-23.

Dewey, John. (1915). The school and society. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Elkind, D. (1976). Child development and education. A Piagetian perspective. New York: Oxford University Press.

Elkind, D. (1981). Child development and early childhood education: Where do we stand today? Young Children, 36(5), 2-9. EJ 247 634.

Elkind, D. (1986). Formal education and early childhood education: An essential difference. Phi Delta Kappan, 67(9), 631-36. EJ 337 505.

Elkind, D. (1988). Educating the very young: A call for clear thinking. National Educational Association: The Early Years 6(6), 22-27. EJ 366 886.

Elkind, D. (1989). Developmentally appropriate practice: Philosophical and practical implications. Phi Delta Kappan, 71(2), 113-117. EJ 397 708.

Erikson, E. H. (1950). Childhood and society. New York: Norton.

Fagot, B. I. (1973). Influence of teacher behavior in preschool. Developmental Psychology, 9(2), 198-206. EJ 084 946.

Hirsh-Pasek, K., Hyson, M., Rescorla, L. & Cone, J. (1989, April). Hurrying children: How does it affect their academic, social, creative and emotional development? Paper presented at the biennial meeting for the Society for Research in Child Development, Kansas City, MO.

Hohmann, M., Banet, B. & Weikart, D. P. (1979). Young children in action. A manual for preschool educators. Ypsilanti, Michigan: The High/Scope Press.

Honig, A. S. (1980). The young child and you--learning together. Young Children, 35(4), 2-10. EJ 224 197.

Karnes, M. B., Johnson, L. J. & Beauchamp, K. D. F. (1988). Enhancing essential relationships: Developing a nurturing affective environment for young children. Young Children, 44(1), 58-65. EJ 380 637.

Katz, L. C. (1987). Early education: What should young children be doing? In Kagan, S. L. & Zigler, E. F. (Eds), Early Schooling: The national debate. New Haven: Yale University.

Lay-Dopyera, M. & Dopyera, J. E. (1987). Strageties for teaching. In Seefeldt, C. (Ed.), The early childhood curriculum: A review of current research (pp.13-31). New York: Teachers College Press.

McAfee, O. D. (1985). Circle time: Getting past "Two Little Pumpkins." Young Children, 40(6), 24-29. EJ 328 503.

Mitchell, A. & Modigliani, K. (1989). Young children in public schools? The "only ifs" reconsidered. Young Children, 44(6), 56-61. EJ 395 644.

Office of Human Development Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau (1984). Head Start Performance Standards. In Head Start Policy Manual. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. DHHS Publication No. (OHDS) 84-31131.

Piaget, J. (1950). The psychology of intelligence. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Powell, D. R. (1987). Comparing preschool curricula and practices: The state of research. In Kagan, S. L. & Zigler, E. F. (Eds.), Early Schooling: The national debate. New Haven: Yale University.

Rogers, D. L. (1987). Encouraging extended conversations with young children. Day Care and Early Education, 15, 23-27.

Schweinhart, L. J. (1988). How important is child-initiated activity? Principal, 67(5), 6-10. EJ 372 010.

Schweinhart, L. J. & Weikart, D. P. (1988) Education for young children living in poverty: Child-initiated learning or teacher-directed instruction? The Elementary School Journal, 89(2), 213-225. EJ 382 623.

Sigel, I. E. (1987). Early childhood education: Developmental enhancement or developmental acceleration? In Kagan, S. L. & Zigler, E. F. (Eds.), Early schooling: The national debate (pp.129-150). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Stipek, D. J. (1983). Work habits begin in preschool. Young Children, 38(4), 25-31.

Tarnay, E. D. (1965). What does the nursery school teacher teach? New York: NAEYC.

Tegano, D. W., Sawyers, J. K. & Moran, J. D. (1989). Problem-finding and solving in play: The teacher's role. Childhood Education, 66(2), 92-97.

Walden, T.A. & Ramey, C. T. (1983). Locus of control and academic achievement: Results from a preschool intervention program. Journal of Educational Psychology, 75(3), 347-58. EJ 289 034.

Zigler, E. F. (1987). Formal schooling for four-year-olds? No. In Kagan, S. L. & Zigler, E. F. (Eds.), Early schooling: The national debate (pp.27-44). New Haven: Yale University Press.