



Making the Body-Brain-Mind Connection

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Guiding Principles

- Development begins in the prenatal period and extends throughout life.
- Nurturing and responsive relationships provide the foundation for healthy growth and development.
- Development occurs through a complex interaction between genetic factors and environmental experiences.
- Optimal growth is achieved when good health and nutrition are combined with nurturing and responsive caregiving.
- Genetic factors and environmental deficiencies can cause developmental delays.
- Development occurs across multiple domains:
- Development in one domain influences development in other domains.
- Development proceeds through a predictable sequence of milestones.
- Cultural context influences every aspect of development.
- Children's individual differences and temperament influence development and learning.
- Children's learning occurs throughout the day through everyday experiences and routines.
- Children's learning can be enhanced by families and early childhood teachers.
- All children can benefit and learn from sharing experiences with other children.
- There is a strong, direct connection between the early years and later success in school and life.

Classroom Fundamentals

- ◆ Opportunities for discovery and divergent learning.
- ◆ Brain functions optimally in a high challenge and low threat environment.
- ◆ Brain likes novelty.
- ◆ Brain works best in a social situation.
- ◆ Manipulatives enhance learning.
- ◆ The environment must allow for “play” and exploration as well as inquiry.
- ◆ Environment must be appealing and stimulating.
- ◆ Set up of classroom/learning environment is critical
- ◆ Environment supports resiliency skills.
- ◆ Cultural relevancy.
- ◆ One of a caregiver’s main objectives is always safety: physical, verbal, emotional.

What is Play?

Play is voluntary

Play is meaningful

Play is symbolic

Play is rule-governed

Play is pleasurable

Play is episodic

Characteristics of Play

Play looks simple

Play usually looks like fun

Play may look trivial to some adults

Play takes different forms

Play is legitimate school activity

S E A L

Stimulus (any sensory provocation)



Emotion (positive or negative)



Attention (positive emotions drive executive functions—negative emotions drive survival)



Learning (the response to the attentional variant)

(adapted from Robert Sylwester's *A Biological Brain in a Cultural Classroom*)