Chapter 3 Defining the Young Child

What Makes Children Different?

• Genetic makeup
• Environment
  – “Ecology of the family”
• Grow and develop at different rates
• Development is predictable and follows a sequence with behavioral swings
• Gender and race differences

Areas of Development

Common Characteristics

• Differences in physical characteristics
• Behaviors are individualized
• Children are similar and exhibit standard behaviors at certain ages
• Universal characteristics
  – Children all have the same needs
  – Children all go through same developmental stages
  – Children have the same developmental goals, although timing and cultural influences differ

Word Pictures

• Each developmental phase has characteristic traits
• Normative data from Gesell, Piaget, Elkind, Erikson, and Vygotsky
• Common behaviors help teachers prescribe programs and plan activities

Value of Word Pictures

• Behavior and guidance
  – What range of behavior occurs
  – Recognize them as normal patterns
  – Avoid expecting too much or too little
• In curricula
  – Gear activities to each child’s appropriate developmental level
  – Tailor curricula to individual children within the context of the classroom
• Cultural awareness and identity
  – Read stories from multiple cultures
  – Develop art projects demonstrating the world’s peoples and traditions
### Using Word Pictures: Six Developmental Areas

1. Social-emotional development
   - Relationships—self and others
2. Language development
   - Receptive and expressive language
3. Physical/Motor development
   - Gross, perceptual, and fine motor
4. Cognitive development
   - Perceive and think
   - Curiosity, memory, attention, knowledge, problem solving, analytical thinking, reasoning, reading, and math
5. Cultural identity and development
   - Attitudes and cultural awareness, cultural milestones
   - Interaction of children’s development
6. Creative development
   - Includes movement, dance, music, and painting, as well as originality, imagination, divergent thinking, and problem solving

### Guidelines for Using Word Pictures

- Balance impressions with classroom experience
- Get a perspective on the range of developmental norms a child exhibits over several of the chronological age groupings
- Norms refer to average behavior
- Children go through most of the stages in the same sequence
- Word Pictures should only be used as a guideline
- Focus on what the children can do, rather than on what they cannot do

### Developmental Differences

- Development follows a sequence

**HOWEVER**
- Children grow and develop at different rates
- Children have their own inner timetables
- Children are ready to learn according to his/her maturation process
- Readiness factor is to be respected

### Implications for Teaching: Plan for Individual Learning Styles

- Plan for individual and group activities according to age levels
- Plan for all age levels with understanding of variations within a one-year span
- Know individual children, strengths and challenges
- Set group goals
- Modify activities for children with special needs
- What’s Your Child Learning Style

### Children with Special Needs

- 15 to 20 percent with atypical development
- Children who are gifted
- Children with disabling conditions
  - Child’s normal health and development are
    - Delayed
    - Distorted, atypical, or abnormal
    - Severely or negatively affected

### Types of Disabilities (from mild to severe)

- Speech and language
  - Hearing impairment
  - Stuttering, articulation, cleft palate
- Physical/Motor
  - Blindness
  - Orthopedic
- Intellectual
  - Brain injury or dysfunction
  - Learning disabilities
- Social-emotional
  - Destructive
  - Withdrawn
- Autism, Asperger Syndrome
- Depression and anxiety
- Psychosis
- Attention deficit
- Health disabilities
  - Many diseases and conditions
- Specific learning disabilities
Learning Disabilities

• May have any of the following difficulties
  – Poor memory
  – Perception
  – Auditory or visual discrimination problems
  – Dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia
  – Learning disorders of unknown causes

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

• Affects 3 to 5% of all school-age children
  – Restlessness
  – Has trouble with follow-through
  – Easily distracted by stimuli
  – Difficulty with social relationships
  – Loses things: has difficulty with organization
• Use positive guidance strategies

Public Recognition for Children with Special Needs

• Legislative initiatives
  – PL 94–142 Rights of all children to attend school
  – PL 99–457 Rights of intervention and education for all children ages birth to 18
  – Reauthorization of the Americans with Disabilities Act PL 101–336
• National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Position on Inclusion

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

• Difference between terms of mainstreaming and inclusion
• Inclusion is about belonging, having worth, and having choices
• All teachers must
  – Foster interactions between children
  – Receive training to work with special needs
  – Work with families
  – Make sure individual differences are addressed in programs

Children Who Are Gifted

• Intellectual and creative potential superior to most children of the same age
• Can include children with special needs as well
• Disagreements over the definition of giftedness limit programming
• Gifted children need to be challenged with an enriching curriculum

Dealing with Bias and Stereotypes

• Teachers should be familiar with and plan an individualized approach to learning, emphasizing discovery learning through self-direction and independence and appreciate the unique individual differences
• Rejection: A teacher cannot allow a child to be rejected based on gender, race, ethnicity, or special needs
  – Rejection is NOT permitted
  – Accept differences as well as likenesses
  – Avoid fear through understanding and knowledge
Cultural, Racial, and Ethnic Considerations

• The population includes many different types of cultures
• Teachers must be informed about children’s cultural history, beliefs, and values
• Testing instruments are often biased
• Demonstrate cultural and linguistic sensitivity
• See Word Pictures of different cultural groups’ values and beliefs

Characteristics of Cultural Groups

• Caution: General overviews are to help, not stereotype
• Get to know each child’s family and appreciate their values without judgment
• Be insightful into curriculum planning without using judgment

Children are Remarkable

• Infants Crawling
  – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryrECPwZFIU&mode=related&search=
• Infant Laughing
  – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5P6U6m3cqk&mode=related&search=
  – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXXm696UbKY&mode=related&search=
• One Year

More Pictures

• Share pictures of children
• Describe the child
  – Identify the age level
  – Identify the area of development
  – Identify key characteristics associated with the age and area of development
• Refer to text pages 102-110

Summary

• Children share many common characteristics while displaying wide individual differences
• Profile Charts – Word Pictures describe normal development and may help teachers understand when a particular behavior is likely to occur.
• Growth and development do not proceed normally for all children.
• The changing demographics require new teaching strategies, culturally appropriate curriculum and special efforts to work with parents from a multicultural perspective.

References

• The ABC’s Of Child Development: Developmental Milestones For Your Child's First Five Years
• Is My Child On Track