

Promoting the Youngest Citizens

Mary A. Moran, Ph.D.
Christian Children's Fund

Developmental Perspectives

- The Individual Child
- Ecological Model of Development
- Family Influences
- Cultural and Contextual Influences

The Individual Child

- Cognitive Development

Problem Solving and the Ability to
Generate Multiple Solutions

Decision Making and the Ability to Weigh
Evidence and Predict Outcomes

Social Cognition and Perceiving the
Perspective of Others

Awareness of Thinking

The Individual Child

- Emotional Development

Acquisition of Differentiated Emotions

Ability to Regulate Emotion and Reflect on
Different Degrees of Emotion

Capacity to Recognize and Empathize with
Emotions of Others

The Individual Child

- Social Development

Ability to Share

Ability to Cooperate with Another toward a
Joint Goal or Shared Vision

Capacity to Work as Part of a Group

Ecological Model of Development

- Interacting with an increasing number of people and in larger groups
- Participating in an increasing number of environments
- Being exposed to people with increasingly different backgrounds and experiences

Family Influences

- Family values
- The various contexts within which family members participate- parents' work environments, siblings' school and recreational environments, extended family members, parents' and siblings friends, parents' community activities and organizations
- Family involvement in the early childhood program

Cultural and Contextual Influences

- Cultural values regarding gender, ability, race, ethnicity, language, religion and how strongly those values are held
- Role of behavioral expectations
- Amount and type of diversity within the environment and the level to which it penetrates daily life
- Openness with which diversity is engaged and discussed

Classroom Strategies

- Morning Meetings and Setting Curriculum

Teachers who encourage individual expressions/decisions and multiple ideas

Teachers who provide opportunities to express individual decisions and encourage exploration of how they impact others

Teachers who provide opportunities for collective decision-making

Classroom Structure

- Encouraging active decisions and choice
- Individual and group space, materials and activities
- Providing opportunities for leadership and responsibility

Teacher Practices

- Active questioning and encouraging exploring of ideas
- Discussing individual and group decision-making processes/providing opportunities to use different strategies (consensus, voting, etc.)
- Providing children opportunities to make rules-for the classroom, games, etc.
- Encouraging discussion of reasons for decisions

Resolving Conflicts

- Peace Tables

Introducing

Modeling

Facilitating

Independence

Respect for Children's Decisions