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CDF-58 – Critical Issues in Child Development

**Critical Issue Article #30**

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice in the Age of Testing**

By David McKay Wilson

**Step 1:**

1. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) - is the largest nonprofit association in the United States representing early childhood education teachers, paraeducators, center directors, trainers, college educators, families of young children, policy makers, and advocates. NAEYC is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8. NAEYC is committed to becoming an increasingly high-performing and inclusive organization.
2. FPG Child Development Institute - The Frank Porter Graham Center, currently known as the FPG Child Development Institute was founded in 1966 by a small group of scientists who had a vision — to conduct research that would make a difference in children's lives, help families, and inform policies. Today we are one of the nation's largest multidisciplinary centers for studying young children and their families. We have produced groundbreaking work that has shaped how the nation cares for and educates young children.
3. The Alliance for Childhood - The Alliance for Childhood serves as a network that facilitates reflection and action by people with concerns about the care and education of children. It is not a conventional organization, but an expression of a willingness to work together for the betterment of the experience of childhood. It exists in the shared work and spirit of cooperation whereby all partners can find mutual support. It is a collaborative approach that is created by commitment and by the activity itself.

**Step 2:** Some of the main ideas in the article are seen in the beginning, “As the push to teach literacy and math skills reaches farther into preschool and kindergarten, educators are warning that teachers need to address young students’ social, emotional, and physical needs as well as their cognitive development” (Wilson 135). Wilson then points out four concerns that people should consider. One of the four concerns that the author mentions is, “Studies showing some kindergarteners spend up to six times as much time on those topics and on testing and test prep than they do in free play” (Wilson 135). Another important concern is “Instruction is often focused on “scripted” curricula, giving teachers little opportunity to create lessons in response to students’ interests” (Wilson 135).

The article is supported by the three organizations that are in step 1. The NAEYC supports this article with the, “NAEYC’s 12 Principles of Child Development.” Another section of information that Wilson mentions is the “Four Foundations of Learning,” that the FPG Child Development Institute had put together. Both these main ideas are the fundamentals of Child Development and have been researched on for many years now. The main idea is molded by what both organizations have to say about the concerns mentioned in the beginning of this article. Another main concept the article that is important to educate in our societies is said, “For classroom teachers, they say, being responsive means being able to adapt the curriculum to address their students’ needs and interest and to allow children to discuss their experiences, feelings, and ideas. That can be difficult when teachers are following the highly regimented lesson plans now mandated in many classrooms” (Wilson 136).

The article then moves on with, “Learning through Play,” which in the articles says, “Teachers must intentionally engage with their students, shaping play in a way that’s enjoyable, while providing the child with the information and skills to allow playful exploration to produce learning” (Wilson 137). At a young age children need to have hands on learning to experience other than sitting in a class all day. This is a different approach in teaching in order to meet all students learning methods. The article then moves on with, “Let’s Get Physical,” which the article mentions “The NAEYC report, for example, recommends that children play outside every day, have regular physical education classes, and have ample opportunities to use their large muscles for balancing, running, jumping, and other vigorous activities” (Wilson 137). At a young age, children should be able to be physically active outside as well as inside. The research by Dr. Romina Barros mentions that children who have recess attain a better behavior rather than those who have no break.

**Step 3:** The article mentions how, “A report from the American Academy of Pediatrics, however, concluded that play was essential for healthy brain development” (Wilson 135). This research is important to support the main idea that David is trying to address. The FPG Child Development Institute researchers note that the, “emphasize the importance of four foundations of learning: self-regulation, representation, memory, and attachment” (Wilson 135). These four foundations of learning is the solution to help children start off on a good foot for the rest of their education. Everyone should realize how important the first few years of school are, and what it takes to pursue the goal to touch every child’s needs in order for them to be successful. The article also claims how, “In crafting their report, NAEYC researchers reviewed recent educational research, interviewed scores of experts, and observed classrooms. They note the crucial connection between children’s social and emotional life and their academic competence. Children make the biggest strides, the authors found, when they are able to cement secure, consistent relationships with responsive adults” (Wilson 136). The research that is said here is highly important to realize how important children learn better by establishing relationships with adults. Communication skills are a daily routine that children have to start at in early age, and socializing in school is a perfect way to do so.

**Step 4:** The article concludes with a particular message that is very important, “The study shows that giving children a break from their studies helps them with self-regulation, a key predictor of long term success in school. On the playground, children learn how to resolve conflicts, control their actions in a game, and take turns. They also get to use some of that natural energy that spills out of some children in the classroom and in the classroom and can be seen as disruptive” (Wilson 137). The conclusion of this article is to continue giving children the chance to have breaks throughout the school day. Pushing them too hard academically and forcing them to sit for longer periods of time is not a convenient way to learn. It is highly important to give them what they need and pursue a healthy education they deserve.

**Step 5:**

1. In your article you mentioned, “The Alliance for Childhood report recommends at least three daily play periods of an hour or longer in a full day, six hour kindergarten programs, with at least one hour spent playing outdoors. Do you feel like this is enough time? If not how much time do you feel children need?

**Speculation:** Yes, research that I have found all seem to range from the same amount of hours.

1. What can we do about these concerns that you address in the beginning of your article?

**Speculation:** I believe that we as a community and as a parent that we need to educate people about these concerns. The way we would do this is to alert the teachers to let parents know about the situation. The parents have the most control over their children’s education, and have the power to speak, and to actually do something about it.

**Step 6:** The problemas a Child Development professional would be that a teacher has no power to change this by themselves. A professional would need to go by the subject material that they are given, and obligated to teach. On top of that they are deadlines that need to be met fast. Despite the fact that you are expected to meet every single student’s need. This can be very hectic when trying to attempt a difficult task like this. Children then are being rushed into learning subjects at a faster rate. The mind of a young brain is impossible to attain so much information. Another issue that would come up is how some parents do not care nor would want to do anything about it. Some might even say that Physical Education is a waste of time. That is not to say that there is no hope, but to make it a priority as a Child Development professional.

**Step 7:**

1. UNC FPG Child Development Institute. Gina Harrison. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. February 6, 2012 <<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/main/about.cfm>>.

**Step 8:** The only way to fix a concern like this would doing more on the subject matter, and to communicate with the parents about these issues. What I would do with this information is to keep researching more articles and different perspectives on the subject. I would like to read what different authors of articles would have to say about these concerns. The parents have the power to get together in order to help their children’s education. I would like to share this article with any Child Development professional in order to find a solution to this concern. Despite the ethical issues that may come up, but I believe that there is hope for the future, and we need to make education the priority.

**Step 9:** 1.Excellent: should be definitely be retained.