



Ronald Mah, M.A., Ph.D.

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, MFC32136

Psychotherapy, Parent Education, Consulting & Staff Development

433 Estudillo Ave., #305, San Leandro, CA 94577-4915

(510) 614-5641 Office - (510) 889-6553 fax - E-mail: Ronald@RonaldMah.com - Web: www.RonaldMah.com

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES FOR INFANT/TODDLER CARE

Part 1: TEN PRINCIPLES OF INFANT/TODDLER CAREGIVING

*from **Infants, Toddlers, and Caregivers** (1989), by Janet Gonzalez-Mena & Dianne Widmeyer Eyer, Mayfield Publishing Company, 1240 Villa St., Mountain View, CA 94041.

1. Involve infants and toddlers in things that concern them. Don't work around them or distract them to get the job done faster.
2. Invest in quality time, when you are totally available to individual infants and toddlers. Don't settle for supervising groups without focusing (more than just briefly) on individual children.
3. Learn each child's unique ways of communicating (cries, words, movements, gestures, facial expressions, body positions) and teach them yours. Don't underestimate their ability to communicate even though their verbal language skills may be non-existent or minimal.
4. Invest in time and energy to build a total person (concentrate on the "whole child"). Don't focus on cognitive development alone or look at it as separate from total development.
5. Respect infants and toddlers as worthy people. Don't treat them as objects or cut little empty-headed creatures to be manipulated.
6. Be honest about your feelings around infants and toddlers. Don't pretend to feel something that you don't or not to feel something that you do.
7. Model the behavior you want to teach. Don't preach.
8. Recognize problems as learning opportunities, and let infants and toddlers try to solve their own difficulties. Don't rescue them, constantly make life easy for them, or try to protect them from all problems.
9. Build security by teaching trust. Don't teach distrust by being undependable or often inconsistent.
10. Be concerned about the *quality* of development in each stage. Don't rush infants and toddlers to reach development milestones.*

Note: If you look at these principles carefully, you will notice that they are excellent principles for working with preschoolers, older children, and people in general, and in a variety of situations!



Ronald Mah, M.A., Ph.D.

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, MFC32136

Psychotherapy, Parent Education, Consulting & Staff Development

433 Estudillo Ave., #305, San Leandro, CA 94577-4915

(510) 614-5641 Office - (510) 889-6553 fax - E-mail: Ronald@RonaldMah.com - Web: www.RonaldMah.com

Part 2: SIX MAJOR AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT & CURRICULUM AT FOUR DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

*from **Responding to Infants-** The Infant Activity Manual (1983) by Inez D. Moyer, T.S. Denison and Company, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

SIX MAJOR DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS:

Fine Motor - Gross Motor - Intellectual - Social/Emotional - Language - Self-Care

FOUR DEVELOPMENTAL AGE LEVELS:

6-12 months - 12-18 months - 18-24 months - 24-30 months

Part 3: SETTING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Environmentally Based Learning- Children learn by interacting with the world. Through including or excluding things in the environment, caregivers can determine to some degree what is or is not learned. blocks or not, guns or not, dolls or not, crayons, scissors, places to climb, hide, cuddle, be alone, etc.

INDOOR SPACE

Interest areas- When the room is divided into interest areas, children are offered clear choices: quiet activity, table toys, climbing, blocks, etc.

- separate noisy areas from quiet areas;
- clearly define areas using shelves, tables, or tape;
- display at accessible height;
- help children see what choices are available and how materials are to be used;
- place logically (art near water);
- all areas visible to adults;
- incorporate traffic patterns that keeps children from interrupting each other.

Observe children to see if the set up is working: choices made, appropriate and creative use, keeps attention, experience success, materials cared for, self-managed. Is there a **get-away quiet place?**

Problems:

- running- too much open space,
- fighting over toys- not enough duplicate toys,
- wandering- too cluttered, choices not clear, not enough to do,
- easily distracted- areas undefined/not closed off enough,



Ronald Mah, M.A., Ph.D.

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, MFC32136

Psychotherapy, Parent Education, Consulting & Staff Development

433 Estudillo Ave., #305, San Leandro, CA 94577-4915

(510) 614-5641 Office - (510) 889-6553 fax - E-mail: Ronald@RonaldMah.com - Web: www.RonaldMah.com

OUTDOOR SPACE

Arranged so that children know where play area begins and ends. Scaled to size. Balance between materials and equipment, and space that fosters both indiv. & group play. Easily supervisable.

ROLES & SCHEDULES

The Parent's/Teacher's Role:

Observe and then make developmentally appropriate decisions.

- Interactions and questioning techniques- avoid yes/no questions.
- Describing what child is doing. (**Providing language**).
- Asking child to describe what he/she is doing. Asking questions that invite children to examine their own work and look for new possibilities. (**focusing and extending**)
- Asking questions that encourage children to put together their information in order to arrive at an answer. (**higher order thinking**).
- Asking questions that help children look for many possible ideas or solutions to problems. (**alternative thinking**).
- Asking questions that encourage child to explore their feelings and emotions. (**encouraging self-awareness & validating feelings**).

Extending and Enriching Children's Play

- Adding new materials, equipment, and props,
- Asking questions, offering suggestions, answering questions, bring in outside resources, field trips.

The Daily Schedule: Balance between

- active and quiet times,
- large, small group and individual time (in preschool situations),
- indoor and outdoor time,
- child-initiated activities and materials and adult directed stuff.
- Also, arrival & departure, meals & snacks, sleep/rest time, self-help time, clean-up, and transitions.

AREAS OF FOCUS AND APPLICATION

Blocks: blocks are designed in mathematical units. Get concrete understanding of concepts essential to logical understanding: sizes, shapes, numbers, order, area, length, and weight; large and small muscle development; language, aesthetic, and social development; cooperative play; problem solving; respecting others work.

4 stages of block play: Carrying Blocks, Piling Blocks and Laying Blocks on the Floor, Connecting Blocks to Create Structures (3-4), Making Elaborate Constructions (4-6).



Ronald Mah, M.A., Ph.D.

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, MFC32136

Psychotherapy, Parent Education, Consulting & Staff Development

433 Estudillo Ave., #305, San Leandro, CA 94577-4915

(510) 614-5641 Office - (510) 889-6553 fax - E-mail: Ronald@RonaldMah.com - Web: www.RonaldMah.com

House Corner: a forum where they can safely act out fears and relive life experiences. Take on the roles they fear and learn to control them. Opportunities to learn. Act out roles, develop skills. Learn about selves, families, and society. Fine motor skill development. Cooperation and negotiation skills.

3 stages of dramatic play:

- Imitative Role Play (1yr)- like real people they know- using real props;
- Make-Believe Play using imagination using symbolic props- inventive actions and situations (fears and worries);
- Socio-Dramatic Play (3-4yr)- includes elements of two previous stages but requires verbal interaction btwn two or more children- requires a planning of roles, complex plots, and more time.

Table Toys: Physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive skills-

3 functional categories:

- Self-correcting toys which fit together in a specific way.
- Open-ended toys which have not right or wrong solution;
- Collectibles are like open-ended toys but are composed of sets of like objects.

2 stages of play:

- exploration where use all senses to become familiar with a toy; followed by
- experimentation which is the actual use of the object- test to see how it works and how many ways it works.

Art: promotes creativity, is fun, develops physical skills including hand-eye coordination and fine motor movements, instills pride. Means to express, make choices, try out, plan, and experiment. Explore and discover.

4 stages of drawing and painting (from 18 months to six years) : disordered scribbling, controlled scribbling, naming a picture that was not planned, and representational drawing.

Sand & Water: encounter principles of math and science; physical dexterity, social skills, cognitive learning and skills (sink & float), sensory satisfaction.

3 stages of sand and water play: sensory motor exploration; planned and experimental play; greater complexity, drama, imagination (more cooperative).

Library Corner:

- gain information & adjust to new experiences,
- learn to deal with difficult events, acquire specific knowledge,
- become familiar with different kinds of literature,
- learn about social responsibilities,
- learn new ideas,
- expand imagination and creativity,
- have their life experiences reinforced,



Ronald Mah, M.A., Ph.D.

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, MFC32136

Psychotherapy, Parent Education, Consulting & Staff Development

433 Estudillo Ave., #305, San Leandro, CA 94577-4915

(510) 614-5641 Office - (510) 889-6553 fax - E-mail: Ronald@RonaldMah.com - Web: www.RonaldMah.com

- understand their feelings, fears, and problems are not unique to them,
- feel good about themselves.

2 stages of library use: exploration and experimentation.

5 stages of book use:

- exploration, playing at reading, and having books read to them;
- understanding sequencing of stories (beginning, middle, end)- details important;
- learn to relate stories to pictures and words- gaining more awareness of written words as symbols for ideas and thoughts;
- matching words to printed text; focus on text and meaning of words - begin sight word recognition.

Outdoors: an extension of indoor classroom (cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical learning) plus outdoor sensory experiences, science, etc.

2 stages of outdoor play: exploration and experimentation.