Early Childhood
2-6 years old

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Dear Preschool Teachers,

We are making this book to help you understand where your students are when they enter your program, what they are developing, and how you can help them, based on certain theorists.

We hope it helps,

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Physical Development

Your students will be/have:

- Improving both fine and gross motor skills
- Increasing, yet more limited ability to draw, write, and cut
- Increasing their ability to run, jump, tumble, climb, and swing
- Learning how to hold a pencil and control scissors
- Learning to ride a tricycle, catch and throw a ball
- Transitioning from afternoon naps: need 11 hours of sleep at night
- Losing the rounded, babyish appearance
- Arms and legs lengthening for a more proportionate body
- Lots of physical energy - boys typically more active
- Brain begins synaptic pruning - strengthening neural connections
Social and Emotional Development

Your students will be/have:
- Preference for small, frequent rewards
- Some signs of empathy
- Growing ability to take other's perspectives
- Positive self-concepts and high self-esteem

Familiar with and use labels for basic emotions:
- Showing attachment-desire to be close to parents when afraid,
- Increasing ability to control aggression and other emotions

Focus on mastery of skills, not performance:
- Understanding of I me, mine: greater concern for one's own need than others
- Growing realization that the mind doesn't always represent events accurately (false belief)

Concrete self-descriptions (I'm a boy, I'm pretty)

Able to show self-conscious emotions (pride and guilt)
Cognitive Development

Your students will be/have:

- Appearance of counting
- Using illogical reasoning

- Able to pretend in socio-dramatic play
- Limited cause-and-effect understanding

- Limited knowledge base

Knowledge of letters and letter sound correspondence, some knowledge of written conventions (left-to-right)

- Short attention span—easily distracted
- Beginning literacy skills—ability to write name and other letters, increasing

- Limited perspective taking
- Ability to stack blocks, name objects, and draw simple shapes

Increasing conscious recall of past events

Rapidly developing language skills and vocabulary

Using over-regularization (foots, goed)

Some understanding and use of symbols

Success at remembering short lists and following simple directions

Problem solving—can break into sub-goals to complete
Erik Erikson

Psychosocial Theory

Teachers: Talk to students about what is important to them. Empathize!

Encourage imaginative play!

Within each stage the child acquires new attitudes resulting from the last successful stage.

Development = Life Long

People grow from life's challenges.

You Did It!

Field Trip

Friends

Super!
Cognitive Development Theory

Early Childhood: Preoperational Stage; more complex, mindful play

Teachers: Engage children in hands-on, active learning!

Be sensitive to each child's current level of understanding

Children are active learners

Look what I made
Stage 1 of Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Reasoning

Children think of what is right as that which authority says is right. Doing the right thing is obeying authority and avoiding punishment.
What children can do on their own is their level of actual development and what they can do with help is their level of potential development.

Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development.

In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself.

– Vygotsky

Help make connections from the Big Kid world to the Little Kid world.

Curriculum
Since children learn through interaction, curricula should be designed to emphasize interaction between learners and learning tasks.

Help them develop cognitive tools they will need for the rest of their lives.
Gardner believes that everyone possesses certain intelligences. Some people have multiple intelligences where they flourish others seem to shine in just one area. Gardner feels that it is important to expose children to the different sources of intelligences so they can thrive in their strongest area. Students can be successful in classroom subject matter when teaching methods focus on each student’s strong areas of intelligence.
Multiple Intelligences

Verbal Linguistic - word and letter recognition, story telling

Visual Spatial - painting and drawing

Bodily/Kinesthetic - dancing, aerobic exercise, playing sports

Naturalist - outdoor nature collecting, mapping, comparison of natural elements
Early childhood children tend to throw tantrums when they don't get what they want. When the desired behavior is performed (the child gets what he or she wants) the child removes the unpleasant stimuli (the tantrum) which reinforces and increases the desirable behavior (the adult giving the child what they want) in the future.

Negative Reinforcement ≠ punishment

Positive reinforcements should be encouraged in the classroom. Giving children stickers, stamps, stars, praise or positive gestures when they have good behavior, increases their chances of repeating the behavior.

Skinner believes that children learn behavior trends based off of positive and negative reinforcements. Based on studies performed, children tend to repeat tasks and behaviors that are rewarded or praised while they refrain from behaviors that attract negative responses. A negative reinforcement is when something unpleasant is taken away to increase positive behavior. Operant conditioning states that children learn to engage in behaviors that are...