

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) Position Statement

¿What is it? What's new and what does it look like in action?

May 11, 2021

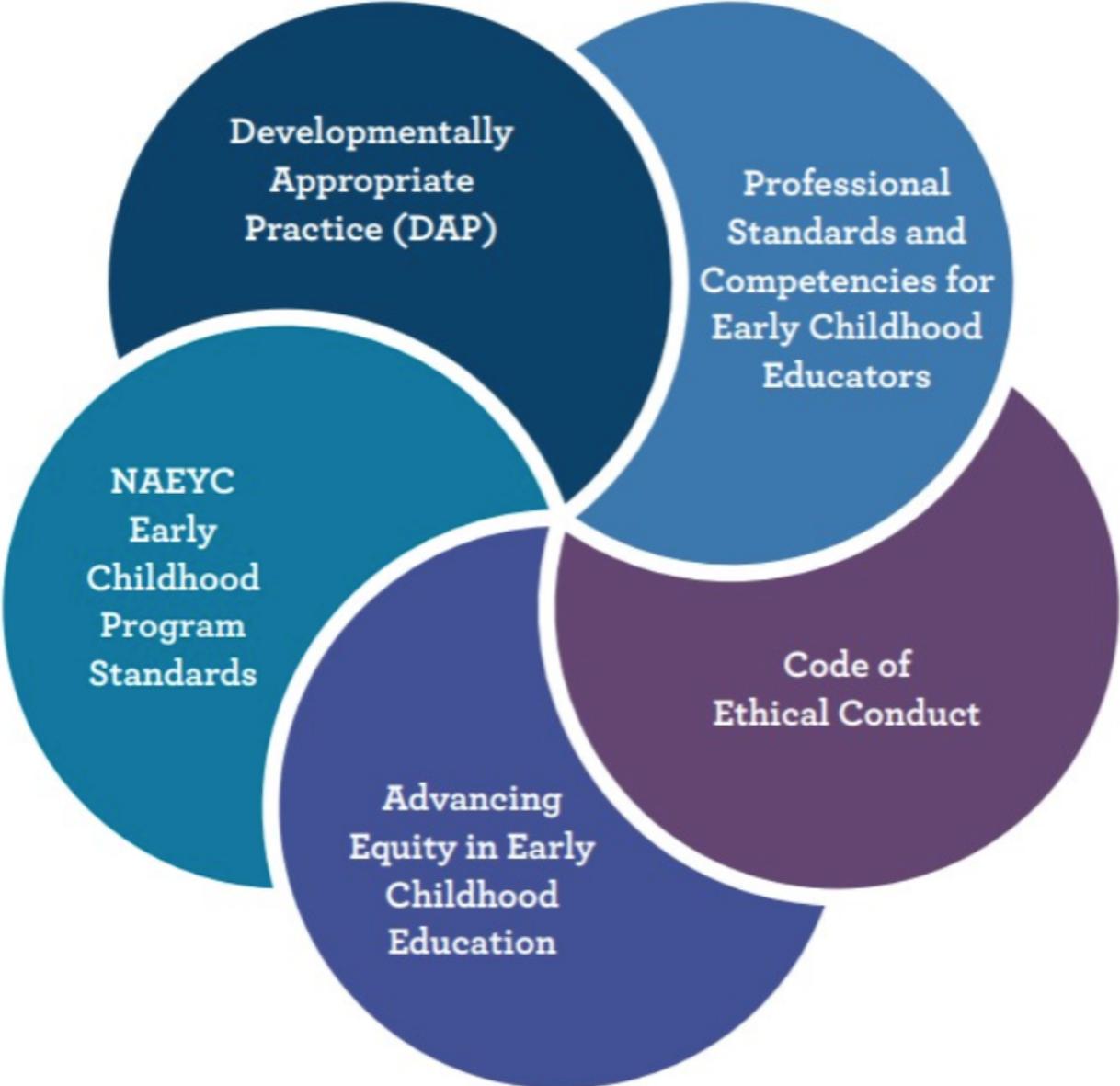
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NAEYC's Foundational Documents



NAEYC's DAP Position Statement

History and Context

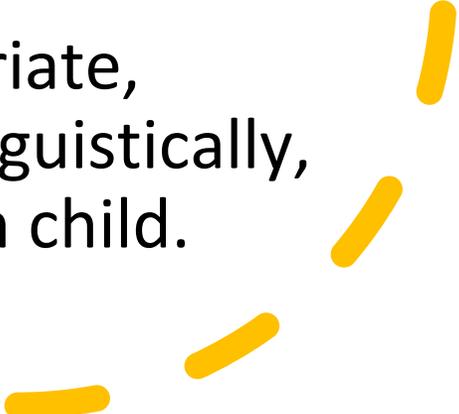
- Originally released in 1980's
 - Rapid growing public prekindergarten programs
 - NAEYC had recently launched its national accreditation system for early learning programs
- Updated roughly every 10 years
- Power to the Profession & Unifying Framework
- Reframing “Best” Practice
- Growing racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the domestic and global populations

What does DAP mean to you?

DAP Position

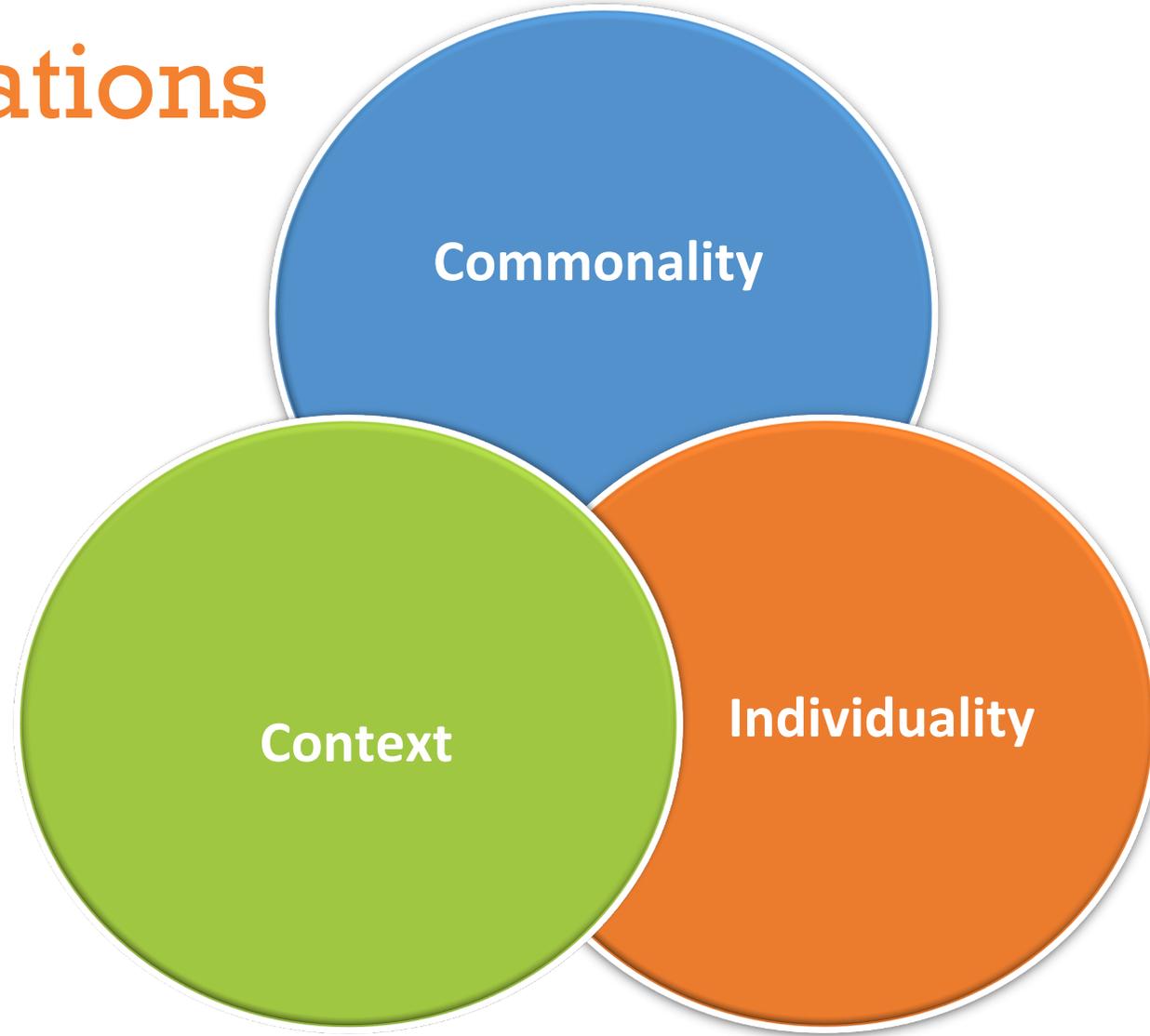
*“Each and every child, birth through age 8, has the right to **equitable** learning opportunities—in centers, family child care homes, or schools—that fully support their optimal development and learning across all domains and content areas. Children are born eager to learn; they take delight exploring their world and making connections. The degree to which early learning programs support children’s delight and wonder in learning reflects the quality of that setting. Educators who engage in developmentally appropriate practice foster young children’s joyful learning and maximize the opportunities for each and every child to achieve their full potential.”*

What is Developmentally Appropriate Practice?

- Methods that promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaged learning.
 - Educators implement DAP by recognizing the multiple assets all young children bring to the early learning program as unique individuals and as members of families and communities.
 - To be developmentally appropriate, practices must be culturally, linguistically, and ability appropriate for each child.
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Core Considerations

Core Considerations



Commonality

- Current research and understandings of processes of child development and learning that apply to all children, including the understanding that all development and learning occur within specific social, cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts
- Early childhood educators need to understand the commonalities of children's development and learning and how those commonalities take unique forms as they reflect the social and cultural frameworks in which they occur.

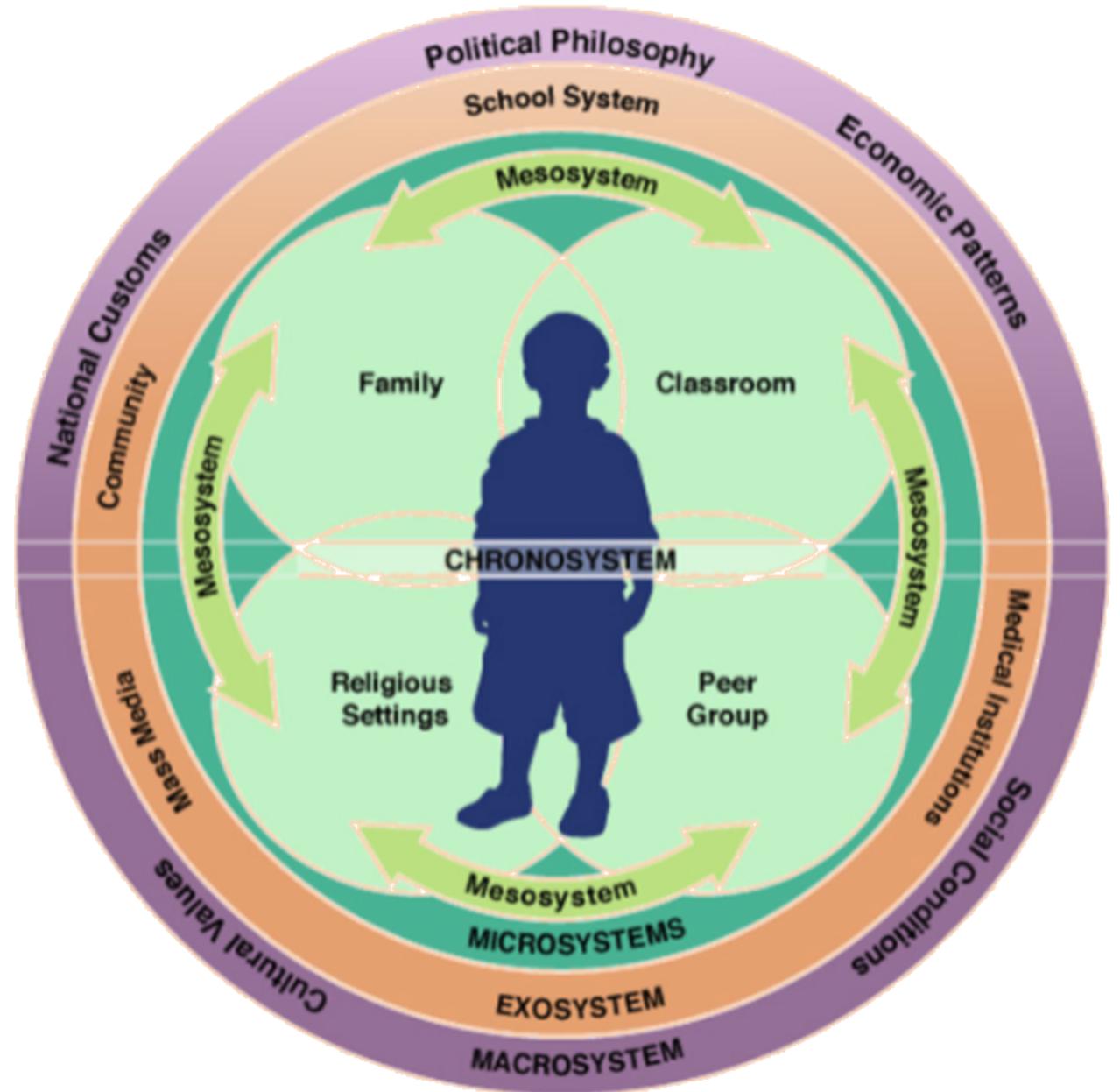
Individuality

- Early childhood educators have the responsibility of getting to know each child well, understanding each child as an individual and as a family and community member.
- Early childhood educators recognize each child as a unique individual with assets and strengths to contribute to the early childhood education learning environment.
- **Strengths-Based**

Context

- Context includes both one's personal cultural context and the broader multifaceted and intersecting cultural contexts in which each of us live
- Early childhood educators must also be aware that they themselves—and their programs as a whole—bring their own experiences and contexts to their decision-making
- Early childhood educators have a professional responsibility to be life-long learners who are able to foster life-long learning in children; stay curious

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Child Development



Guidelines

Six Guidelines for DAP in Action

- Creating a caring, equitable community of learners
- Engaging in reciprocal partnerships with families and fostering community connections
- Observing, documenting, and assessing children's development and learning
- Teaching to enhance each child's development and learning
- Planning and implementing an engaging curriculum to achieve meaningful goals
- Demonstrating professionalism as an early childhood educator

How the guidelines are organized and presented

- *The title/description:* Creating a Caring, Equitable Community of Learners
- *The reason for the guideline:* The foundation of a caring equitable community is consistent, positive, caring relationships.
- *The clarifying practices:* (A. B. C. etc.) Value and recognize each member for the strengths they bring.
- *How educators demonstrate the intent of the guideline:* Educators demonstrate ongoing interest in each child's unique knowledge, skills, and cultural and linguistic experiences and recognize these as assets for learning.



What is a good starting place for each guideline?

- Read the explanation and the bolded A, B, C essential approaches to teaching.
- Anchor your thinking with the main ideas.
- Follow up with focused conversations with your teaching colleagues and others invested in the program.

Principles

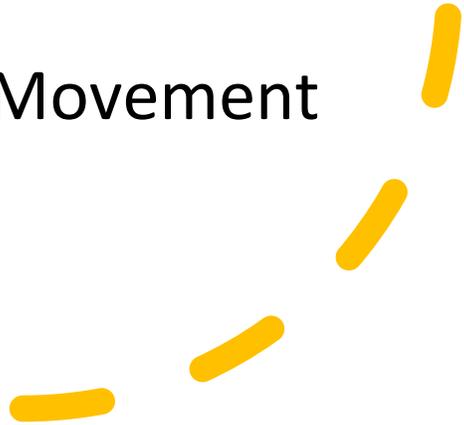
Principles of Child Development and Learning & Implications That Inform Practice

- Development and learning are **dynamic** processes.
- All domains of child development are important; each domain both supports and is supported by the others.
- **Play promotes joyful learning. Play is essential for all children.**
- Although general progressions of development and learning can be identified, variations must be considered.
- Children are active learners from birth.

Principles of Child Development and Learning & Implications That Inform Practice

- Children's motivation to learn is increased when their learning environment fosters their **sense of belonging, purpose, and agency**.
- Children learn in an **integrated** fashion that cuts across academic disciplines or subject areas.
- Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery.
- Used responsibly and intentionally, technology and interactive media can be valuable tools for supporting children's learning and development.

Highlights of the 9 Principles

- Children's brains need integrated learning environments
 - Trauma and specifically racial trauma impact children's learning
 - Fit between learning environment and children's physical needs
 - Play-based learning is critical for children's development
 - Coronavirus and Racial Justice Movement in 2020
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Recommendations

Recommendations for Programs

- Support educators' access to higher education and professional development opportunities that allow them to build the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in the [Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators](#), and ensure they are prepared to carry out each of these guidelines.
- Support and incentivize professional development for administrators, supervisors, and those responsible for assessment and evaluation of early childhood educators to ensure they understand the principles and guidelines of developmentally appropriate practice and use them to inform decisions regarding program implementation.

Recommendations for Programs

- Strive to ensure that program policies facilitate and support strong, continuous relationships between teaching staff and children by offering working conditions and compensation (wages and benefits) that attract and retain a diverse and qualified staff.
- Seek and maintain early learning program accreditation based on systems that are built to support developmentally appropriate practice.
- Strive to ensure that the school or program provides equitable learning opportunities to all children to help them achieve their full potential and avoids the use of suspension or expulsion.

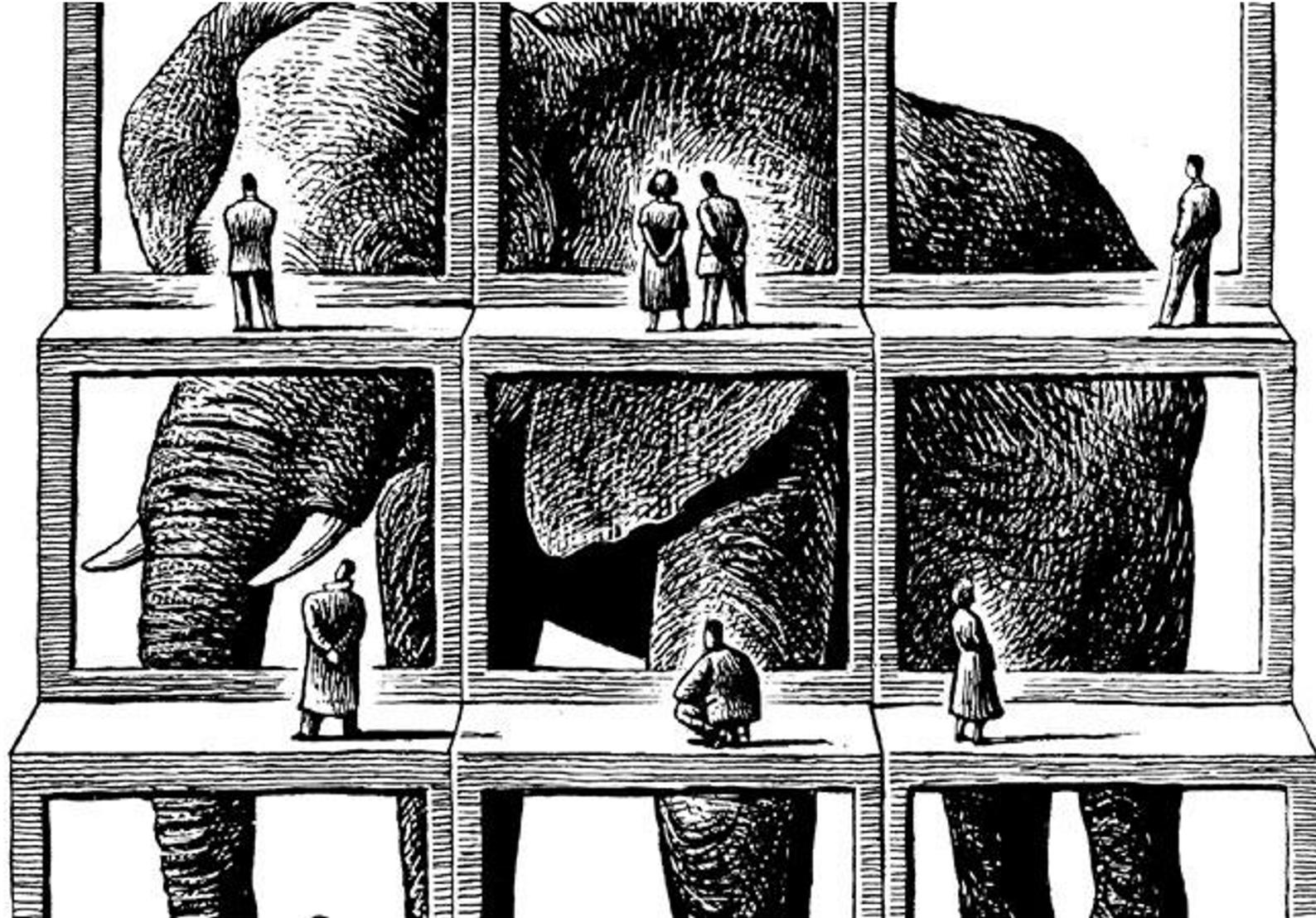
Recommendations for Programs

- Ensure that the curriculum promotes all domains of development while providing a coherent and flexible framework that supports educators in making adaptations when needed.
- Provide mentoring and coaching for educators and administrators
- Actively engage family members and the broader community in all aspects of program planning and implementation, recognizing and taking into account the systemic inequities that can make it difficult for members of traditionally marginalized groups to participate.
- Cultivate relationships with community resources, including local libraries, museums, public parks, physical and mental health consultants, and government services that can support the program and families as well as strengthen civic connections.

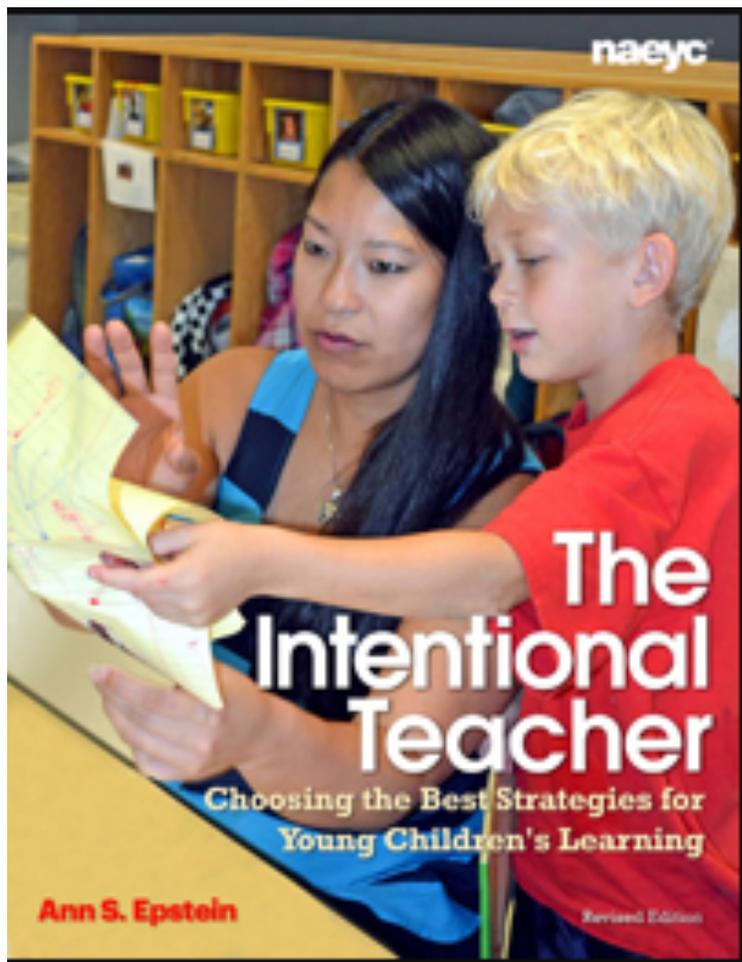
Additional Recommendations

- Recommendations for Higher Education
- Recommendations for Policymakers
- Recommendations for Research

Context Matters

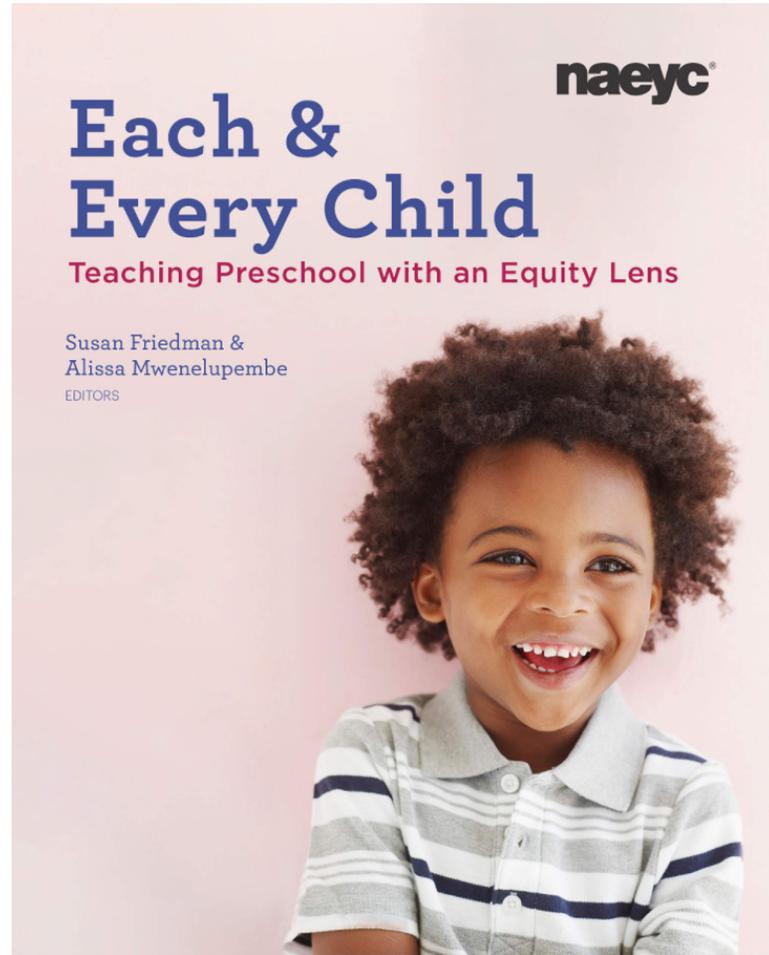


Resources



To be intentional
is to act
purposefully, with
a goal in mind
and a plan for
accomplishing it.
-Ann Epstein

Opportunities



- MDAEYC Professional Learning Community
- Summer & Fall 2021
- Scholarships Available

Questions? Comments? Reactions?

Opportunities to Respond and Discuss

- What excites you about this initiative and the opportunity to define and advance the early childhood profession?
- What isn't being considered as part of this initiative?

NEW SPECIAL EVENT

naeyc® DAP Symposium

Join us for a one-of-a-kind virtual event featuring leading voices in the field.

This is an opportunity for anyone involved in early education to explore the rationale and consequences to their work from the recent revisions to the DAP Position Statement and the upcoming 4th edition of the book *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*.

JUNE 9–10

Join Now

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Position Statement

Adopted by the NAEYC National
Governing Board April 2020

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

National Association for the Education of Young Children

Each and every child, birth through age 8, has the right to equitable learning opportunities—in centers, family child care homes, or schools—that fully support their optimal development and learning across all domains and content areas. Children are born eager to learn; they take delight exploring their world and making connections. The degree to which early learning programs support children's delight and wonder in learning reflects the quality of that setting. Educators who engage in developmentally appropriate practice foster young children's joyful learning and maximize the opportunities for each and every child to achieve their full potential.

#naeycDAP

Disponible en Español: NAEYC.org/dap

Register Now!

NAEYC.org/DAP-Symposium