

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Infants (birth - 18 months)

Environment: Inclusive of indoor and outdoor areas

- space to move freely
- safe
- clean
- levels to roll, creep, crawl onto and around
- individual/private spaces
- various textures - especially softness
- separate, defined spaces for eating, diapering, sleeping
- toys/materials displayed on open, low shelving; toys should be large enough not to be swallowed or get caught in infant's throat; toys should be cleaned/laundered daily (stuffed animals are a breeding ground for germs)
- large motor area - throwing, riding, climbing, crawling, running, jumping. etc.
- push/pull toys area
- sink used while diapering and hand washing must be separate from sink used for food preparation and hand washing

Activities/ Materials

- sensory play materials - water, textures, play dough, paint
- sound making toys
- push and pull toys
- soft balls to throw
- climbing equipment
- soft blocks
- music and movement
- books

Characteristics of the Adults

- warm, nurturing personality
- tolerates movement/noise
- models appropriate behavior
- reads/talks/listens to infant
- accepts different caregiving methods and techniques
- recognizes and accepts differences
- willing to learn
- reliable

- healthy

Schedule

- individual schedule for eating, diapering and sleeping. Note: infants should always be held for bottle feeding, the bottle should never be propped nor given to the infant to hold while laying down, or crawling/walking, older infants may sit in a high chair or at a low table and chair to drink and eat, but should not walk around with food/drink
- daily outdoor time
- time to be held, read to, sung to, talked to
- time to move freely - on a blanket away from others or to roll, creep, crawl, pull up, walk
- time to watch, hold, move to, and choose appropriate toys and materials
- not left in a crib, play pen, swing, infant seat, high chair, stroller or other holding space for more than 15 minutes (exceptions: crib/play pen if sleeping; high chair if eating)
- time to cope with separation
- primary caregiver/provider - responsible for the important elements of care
- parents are welcome at any time

Note: A three-year study of infants in a child care center of highest quality, conducted by Hignett, Cory, Rossiter, and Rodrigues, found the following four program features to be vital in aiding infants through the early years of care:

1. Each infant is assigned upon entry a primary caregiver who is responsible for the important elements of the infant's care day, such as feeding, diapering and sleeping.
2. The child continues in the assigned caregiver's care until the child reaches age 3, if the child remains with that program.
3. Each caregiver is responsible for no more than four infants.
4. The physical environment has the ability to control light, heat and cold, and extraneous noise from the rest of the building.

(From *Young Children*: November 1988, written by William F. Hignett.)