



It's Developmental

How (Im)maturity and
experience influence
behavior.

By

Laurie Prusso-Hatch

What Characteristics Will These Children Need?

- o Self-understanding
- o Know what they want
- o Recognize successes/failures
- o Recognize Strengths
- o The Ability to Think—
independently
- o Like to Problem-Solve
- o Proactive
- o Happy to learn new things
- o Team player
- o Responsible

More trust in what we know about how children learn best

- o What do we know?
- o What do you believe?
- o What kinds of environments and relationships will grow happy, healthy, respectful children who love to learn?



Challenges

Sooner or Later?

- o Children who have their needs consistently met in a timely and nurturing manner in the first three years develop a better sense of:
 - o Delay of gratification
 - o Trust of non-parental adults
 - o Attention and the ability to focus
- o It is THEIR interests and THEIR needs that matter most! This is where learning begins.

5 Things We Can Do Right Now

1. Do what we KNOW is best
2. More REAL play time
3. More relationship based (TIC) interactions
4. More solution oriented interventions
5. More joy in the classroom, program and life

Things We Can Stop Right Now

- o Activity centers that limit time and attention span
- o Dominantly inside time schedules
- o Punitive/consequence/behavioristic environments
- o Overly structured, quiet “tidy” classrooms
- o Unwise and misunderstood focus on “academic” terminology and standards
- o Teacher control of “learning”
- o Outcome focused pressure on teachers, parents and children
- o Sitting still, paying attention, keeping our hands to ourselves

More REAL play time

- Open-ended time—at least 90 minutes 2 or 3 times a day
- More time outside than inside
- More active play

More Active Play!

- o More active exploration and discovery
- o More mess, noise and chaos
- o Rough and Tumble Play!

More open-ended time

- Lots of Open-Ended, unstructured, child initiated or teacher 'Provoked' playtime provides the following benefits.
 - Choice, exploration, experimentation and self-correction in learning.
 - Low-stress opportunities in which children are not being watched, over-supervised or criticized for making mistakes.
 - Enhancement of social and emotional intelligence, especially sufficient time and space to workout life experiences through playful re-enactments

More open-ended time

- Children learn in the most effective way—they teach themselves!
- Children improve skills through repetition and adjustment of usage
- FLOW! A zone in which the child is fully immersed in a mental state that optimizes learning, mastery and internalization of concepts.

More time outside than inside

- Outdoor time can include open-ended time, child initiated play, teacher directed play and more active physicality than indoor time. Children benefit from being outdoors in the following ways.
 - Increased physical development, capability, and coordination
 - Crossover, sensory and vestibular function improvement
 - Improved patterns for an active and healthy lifestyle—early prevention of obesity and all its corollary problems

More time outside than inside

- Supported by skilled adults, children develop stronger language/problem solving and communication skills
- Children develop interests in science and math—outdoor learning opportunities are more natural than typical indoor learning
- Children are more likely to self-initiate
- Children are happier when outdoors
- Fresh air and physical activity relieve stress
- Open-ended nature of outdoor learning supports psychological health, as large motors often hold the chemicals of stress

More relationship based (TIC) interactions

- Trauma Informed Care (such as Conscious Discipline, Positive Discipline and Circle of Concern) acknowledge the life experiences and the absence of life experiences of every child in the relationships adults create with each child and parent.
- Relationship based interactions seek to listen to stories, explore what happened, validate everyone involved and investigate solutions in ways that demonstrate care and concern for each participant of a conflict.

More relationship based (TIC) interactions

- Adults working in the classroom are trained and skilled in managing their own triggers, remaining calm, and supporting children.
- Solutions replace behavioristic rewards, punishments and punitive consequences.
- Inclusion is a goal—not permissive inclusion, but instructive and caring inclusion.
- Adults provide and model language to support all children in learning about their emotions and improving emotional self-control

More solution oriented interventions

- Solution oriented interventions support emotional development, social justice and classroom cohesion.
- Every child is valued—adults avoid seeking a culprit, rather in a genuine disposition of neutrality and trust, a conflict or event is explored.
- Every child is encouraged and respected by every adult.

More solution oriented interventions

- o Adults recognize that children make mistakes and have very little to some impulse control.
- o Adults recognize their work as enhancing each child's empathy by:
 - o Listening attentively to and validating each child
 - o Helping each child listen to each other child
 - o Asking "what?" and "I wonder" questions
 - o Seeking ideas for reparations, solutions and "What should we do now?" from all involved

More solution oriented interventions

- Adults recognize growth and progress in children rather than the avoidance of conflict and troubles in the classroom

More emotional support, including time for the brain to be ready

- o Motivation and Learning require intention and attention
- o Caring and Respectful invitations support learning while demands, impatience and criticism diminish willingness, interest and engagement
- o During early childhood (0-8) children's brains are primed for and seeking support for *their* interests

“By 60 Months:

- Engages in purposeful play for extended periods of time.
- What does “extended period of time” mean?

Joy

- Children experience joy when they are provided safety, security, predictability and respect.
- Teacher dominated time and activity can be the enemy of joy in the classroom
- When the “work to be done” conflict with the “learning that may occur” we lose touch with what we really believe about how children learn and what is best for them.

Expectations and Maturation

- Our expectations for children are more effective when they are aligned with development - maturation, and with each child's life experiences.

Developmental Constraints

- Impulse Control
- Self-regulation
- Delay of Gratification
- Empathy
- Perspective taking

Unrealistic Expectations

- o Lining up
- o Waiting
- o Sitting quietly (circle time)
- o Sharing
- o Say they are sorry
- o Staying “On Task”

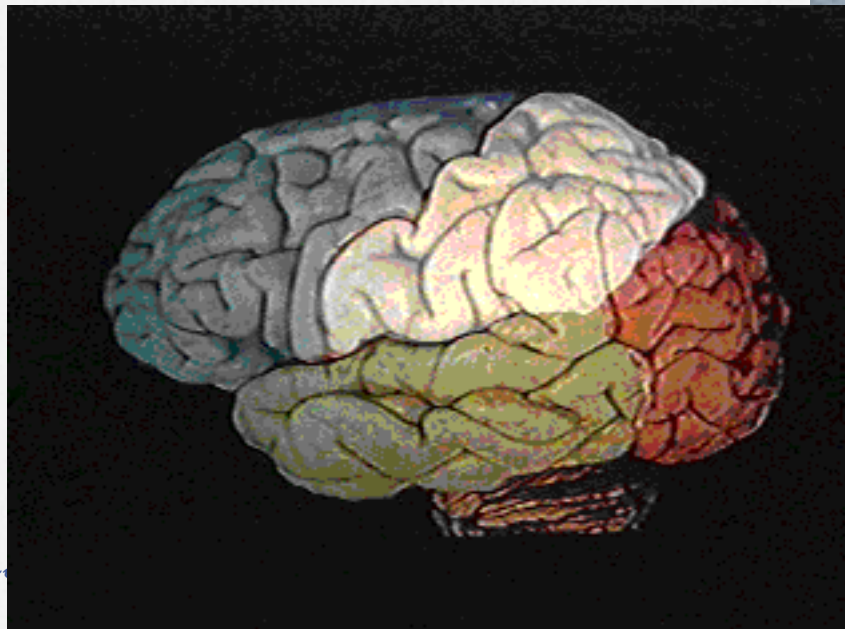
Connect to Heal

o The Three Part Brain

o Survival

o Emotion

o Thinking



I'm A Child

- o To plan with development in mind is to show the greatest respect for children. When we set our expectations and create our programs to achieve our agendas, we forget who we are there for in the first place.

Watch This!

o <https://youtu.be/Bg-GEzM7iTk>

o Ted Talk on Play