

## Using Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) Intentionally with Young Children

By Heather Sargent, Southeast VPK Regional Facilitator

One of the foundations of early childhood education is the concept of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP). What does this mean and why is it so important?

Teachers who implement DAP in their classrooms view and plan for children in three ways. They know about child development and learning; they know about individual differences and appropriateness; and they know about what is culturally important.

Once a teacher has gotten to know the child, the teacher should begin to plan meaningful, quality instruction for the child. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) describes five principles that effective teachers use to plan activities for young children.

1. Creating a caring community of learners
2. Teaching to enhance development and learning
3. Planning curriculum to achieve important goals
4. Assessing children's development and learning
5. Establishing reciprocal relationships with families

Effective teachers and caregivers plan for specific learning situations and they carefully choose strategies that fit each situation. NAEYC has also created a list of specific strategies that these teachers use as they plan for young children. It is also important to keep in mind that these teachers are flexible and observant. This means that they are not afraid to switch the strategy if one is not working. These teaching practices include the following.

**Acknowledge** what children say or do.

**Encourage** persistence and effort rather than just praising and evaluating what the child has done.

**Give specific feedback** rather than general comments.

**Model** attitudes, ways of approaching problems and behavior toward others, showing rather than just telling children.

**Demonstrate** the correct way to do something.

**Create or add challenges** so that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do.

**Ask questions** that provoke children to use their critical-thinking skills.

**Give assistance** such as a cue or hint to help children work on the edge of their current understanding.

**Provide information**, directly giving children facts, verbal labels and other information.

**Give directions** for children's action or behavior.

For more information about DAP, please visit these resources.

<http://www.naeyc.org/dap/preschoolers>

<http://www.naeyc.org/dap/10-effective-dap-teaching-strategies>

### RULES

#### Currently Open

Rule 6M-8.300, Provider and Class Registration Procedures; Application; Eligibility Determination

#### Rules Opening Soon

Rule 6M-8.204, Uniform Attendance Policy

#### Recently Effective

Rule 6M-8.201 Child Enrollment Procedure for the VPK Education Program

(effective 03/20/2017)

Remember to check our website regularly for a listing of proposed rules and notices.

<http://bit.ly/2gkcQIN>

# WHAT IS STEM ALL ABOUT?



Illustration by The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop

By Cassandra Jackson, Educational Policy Consultant

STEM is an acronym. When we break down the acronym into its parts, we see that early childhood programs practice STEM activities every day. **Science** activities include exploring water and sand, comparing and contrasting natural materials like rocks and soil, rolling balls across the room, and looking through a magnifying glass to count how many legs are on the bug that was caught during outdoor play. **Technology** activities include computers, but also identifying simple machines like gears and wheels and pulleys. **Engineering** in preschool happens in the block area. There, children are planning and designing structures every day with little teacher direction. **Math** activities include counting, matching shapes and making patterns.

The STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, math) offer many opportunities for children to use their minds and hands to play, explore and learn. Research shows that giving children exposure to quality, hands-on STEM learning opportunities is important and familiarity with STEM concepts early on is a key predictor of children's school success.

A new report published in January 2017 by the Early Childhood STEM Working Group from the University of Chicago emphasizes the importance of high-quality early childhood STEM education and offers six actionable recommendations for promoting improvement in early STEM education. Additionally, a second report titled STEM Starts Early was also published in January 2017 by the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop and supported by the National Science Foundation. This report provides research and information on common misconceptions around early STEM learning and recommendations that will lead to greater understanding of the importance of prioritizing and investing in STEM learning opportunities for all children. Both reports are available to download at <http://ecstem.uchicago.edu/> and <http://www.ioanganzcooneycenter.org/publication/stem-starts-early/>.

Resources: [http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/rttt/stem/english/STEM\\_Guide\\_English.pdf](http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/rttt/stem/english/STEM_Guide_English.pdf)

<http://www.naeyc.org/stem-starts-early>

## 22nd Annual Children's Week March 26– 31, 2017

Children's Week develops and implements more than 200 community events and activities statewide, bringing thousands of parents, children, policy makers, professionals, community leaders and concerned citizens together to share valuable knowledge and information about children's issues in each community across the state and at the State Capitol.



To view the schedule of events and get additional information on how you can participate please visit [www.childrensweek.org](http://www.childrensweek.org).





## VPK LEARNING CIRCLES

### Be in the Loop!

VPK Learning Circles are ongoing opportunities for early childhood professionals to share strategies, research and best practices in VPK classrooms. Learning Circle activities include

- Practicing new ideas and skills.
- Professional networking.
- Sharing resources and experiences.
- Discussion and brainstorming solutions for challenges faced in the field.

### Who should attend?

VPK providers, directors, teachers and administrators who would like an opportunity to network with other professionals in early childhood education.

### Who do you contact for more information about Learning Circles?

Your local VPK Regional Facilitator organizes and facilitates the Learning Circles. You can find contact information for your regional facilitator on the OEL website at <http://bit.ly/2h2of1D>.



	February Participants	2016-17 Total Participants
Face-to-Face	317	1948
Web-based	0	342

*“There are no days in life so memorable as those which vibrated to some stroke of the imagination.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Online Courses	February Completers	2016-17 Total Completers
Mathematical Thinking for Early Learners	220	1388
Standards for Four-Year-Olds	196	2566
Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors	586	3864
VPK Director Credential Course	104	926
Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom	112	870
English Language Learners in the VPK Classroom	104	646

Florida’s Office of Early Learning in collaboration with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) offers a variety of online and instructor-led training opportunities. To register for any of these training opportunities, please visit DCF’s training website at <http://bit.ly/1oHgYPm>.

Instructor-led Courses	February Classes	February Participants	2016-17 Total Participants
Standards for Four-Year-Olds	1	4	160
Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness	6	48	446
How to Administer the Florida VPK Assessment	8	55	559
VPK Assessment Instructional Implications	8	48	441
*EMEL: Making Sense of Sets and Numbers	15	154	1292
*EMEL: Counting and Operating with Numbers	4	43	425
*EMEL: Patterns, Measurement and Data	9	80	170
*EMEL: Shapes and Spatial Relationships	1	11	70

\*EMEL– Early Mathematics for Early Learners