

Teaching Philosophy Shandeen Belanger

I believe as an adult in the community and more importantly an early childhood educator, it is our duty to be dedicated to the success of the learning foundation being formed in the early years of a child's life. We never stop learning, beginning early will develop a strong understanding of the world around us. This will be accomplished by striving to build trusting relationships with the children and their families. Remaining open to different approaches as I understand there are a variety of ways success can be achieved.

I follow a flexible curriculum that will target five specific developmental domains which include, language, social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and communication. These domains cover a broad range of skills that children will need to build their foundations of learning for future success in life and school. Most importantly I strive to build a community that feels safe and exciting to be a part of, providing the tools necessary for children to discover the fresh world around them.

The way these goals will be accomplished will begin with creating trusting relationships with families. When children see adults interacting in a positive way they develop a sense of security and trust. It is also important that families feel their beliefs and desires for what they want their children to learn and how they learn are being respected and incorporated into the group. With that being said family should be encouraged and welcome to join and contribute their time or ideas when available.

In the different stages of early childhood, children are different in their abilities as they grow. According to Jean Piaget there are four cognitive stages that children learn;

Sensorimotor, Pre-Operational, Concrete Operational and Formal Operational. Children in early childhood go through the first three stages.

They will be in separate groups and will have developmentally appropriate furnishings and toys available. Planning the day ahead will ensure children know what to expect, doing so will foster a sense of security. Certainty is created and they will feel comfortable for what is to come. I know infants need a calm and engaging environment, to create this there will be a limited amount of infants for each group. Multiple caregivers should be present and available for their every need. Comfort and trust is the main priority for infants because they are rapidly taking everything in around them which can cause overwhelmedness. They are incapable of fulfilling their own needs independently so I ensure they feel comfortable before introducing new experiences to them.

Breastfeeding mothers are supported by having a pleasant area with water available for feeding times and are welcomed during any part of the day. A daily schedule will look different for infants due to the fact they nap throughout the day and usually don't follow a specific schedule.

For toddlers following a daily schedule and set of routines form predictability in the child which will support their development. Toddlers are more capable of fulfilling their own needs as they are more aware of their abilities, but they are still in need of assistance and guidance as they grow in the target developmental domains. Each experience is planned with these domains in mind and will be built on the child's masteries and interests. Their environment will be planned with exploration and discovery in mind as they learn through play.

Pre-K Children are more independent and confident in their abilities, if there are some in the group that aren't quite there yet then I will provide activities that will challenge them and then I will scaffold on their abilities. Children at this age seek independence, challenges and their imagination is beginning to develop. Their environment will be divided into specific centers to provide opportunities for focused exploration. Some examples of centers in a pre-k setting are science, dramatic play, reading and math.

Children who are fresh to elementary school experience the beginning of the Concrete stage in Piaget's theory. I will provide many experiences with each development domain in mind where they will feel challenged and confident in their abilities. While giving opportunities to engage in play as play is a way to develop skills and knowledge. Play is still important at this age because it allows them to discover and experiment with their environment. I feel group discussions at this age are important because it creates a sense of community and every voice is heard.

I understand that while targeting these areas it remains important that children are creating a sense of self and independence, which is why I will provide support and comfort. While providing these amazing things, I feel it is crucial to introduce challenges to children so they can become aware of their potential. I want children and families to feel confident in their abilities and choices to obtain a quality life which will contribute to the community in healthy and positive ways.