

## Changes to the NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice

At the November NAEYC Virtual Conference, the newly revised Developmentally Appropriate Practice Statement was released. This statement went through an extensive review process with public comments. As an advocate and former governing board member of NAEYC, I responded to both public comment statements and though I supported the additions to Parts 1 & 3 and was pleased with the emphasis placed on the need for equity and cultural competence. **I was troubled with the changes made to Part 2, the Principles of Child Development. The IPA USA Board of Directors and other organizations are working together to write a letter to the NAEYC Board and the CEO expressing concerns. I hope you will join our effort to elevate these concerns and advocate for minor revisions. If you are willing, please send me an email at [ipausa2019user@gmail.com](mailto:ipausa2019user@gmail.com).**

I am providing a comparison between the 2009 Principles and the 2020 Principles. You will see the first change is from 2009- (12) Principles of Child Development to 2020 to (9) Principles of Child Development.

For the 2020 revision, NAEYC describes the Principles: "NAEYC's guidelines and recommendations for developmentally appropriate practice are based on the following nine principles and their implications for early childhood education professional practice. These principles reflect an extensive research base that is only partially referenced here.<sup>13</sup> Because these principles are interrelated. This linear list does not fully represent their overall complexity (NAEYC, 2020)".

The 2020 DAP Position statement combined some of the Principles in the former 2009 edition and emphasized the importance of play by moving play from the 10<sup>th</sup> Principle in 2009 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Principle in 2020. Unfortunately, there is an evident and troubling absence of a stand-alone Principle that addresses the importance of positive, secure, and consistent relationships, the heart of every early childhood classroom and one of the most effective teaching strategies. Adding to these concerns is the inclusion of a technology Principle, 2020 Principle 9. Within the body of the statement, they describe technology as a tool. **Technology is a tool; it is not a Principle of Child Development.**

The addition of a technology statement raises significant concerns. As stated in Principle 9, technology is a tool, not a Principle of how children grow and develop. Increased exposure of screen time currently being experienced by children, and with the continued concern with the lack of child-initiated play in children's daily lives, the addition of this Principle will give some administrators, teachers, and parents license to inundate children lives with even more technology, resulting in the removal of play as the primary mode of learning. In the detail of this Principle, clarification is provided that recognizes the current concerns regarding technology and media. Unfortunately, just like in the absence of a Principle that explicitly discusses the importance of secure relationships, many educators may not read the detail and see this as permission to overuse technology, replacing hands-on active learning.

As faculty members and advocates for early childhood education, we are continuously challenged to convince future educators to recognize the value of play and include active learning experiences in classrooms with young children. Since technology is an integral part of these future educators' social network, they believe using YouTube videos to read a story to children versus reading the story themselves or using YouTube videos to include songs in the curriculum instead of singing songs with children are equally beneficial for children's development. Instead of going outside to view clouds in a cloud study, they prefer pulling up cloud photos on the SmartBoard or tablet. The inclusion of a Principle 9 sends the wrong

message to the profession. It is understood that technology is a part of our daily experience, but the inundation of screen time that young children are experiencing is cause for concern. You cannot walk into a restaurant or view a child in a car seat without seeing some electronic device in use. Adults are reading cell phones, children are on Ipads/Tablets, and no human interaction is taking place.

"Research shows that screen overuse puts young children at risk of behavior problems, sleep deprivation, delays in social-emotional development, and obesity. Extended time on screens diminishes time spent on essential early learning experiences such as lap-reading, creative play, and other social forms of learning. Relational learning requires healthy interactions with adults, and online experiences falsely marketed as "preschool" sabotage the development of these essential relationships (DEY and the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood).

"All of our knowledge about human development demonstrates that children learn best through exploratory, creative play, and relationships with caring adults. As the American Academy of Pediatrics notes, higher-order thinking skills and executive functions essential for school success, such as task persistence, impulse control, emotion regulation, and creative, flexible thinking, are best taught through unstructured and social (not digital) play. Research shows that screen overuse puts young children at risk of behavior problems, sleep deprivation, delays in social-emotional development, and obesity (DEY and the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood). "

**SCROLL DOWN FOR A SIDE BY SIDE COMPARISON OF THE 2009 AND 2020**

<b>Former 12 Principles of Child Development (NAEYC, DAP 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2009)</b>	<b>9 Principles of Child Development (NAEYC, DAP, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2020)</b>
1. All domains of development and learning – physical, social and emotional, and cognitive – are important, and they are closely interrelated. Children's development and learning in one domain influence and are influenced by what takes place in other domains.	<b>1. Development and learning are dynamic processes that reflect the complex interplay between a child's biological characteristics and the environment, each shaping the other as well as future patterns of growth.</b>
2. Many aspects of children's learning and development follow well documented sequences, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired	<b>2. All domains of child development—physical development, cognitive development, social and emotional development, and linguistic development (including bilingual or multilingual development), as well as approaches to learning—are important; each domain both supports and is supported by the others.</b>
3. Development and learning proceed at varying rates from child to child, as well as at uneven rates across different areas of a child's individual functioning.	<b>3. Play promotes joyful learning that fosters self-regulation, language, cognitive and social competencies as well as content knowledge across disciplines. Play is essential for all children, birth through age 8.</b>
4. Development and learning result from a dynamic and continuous interaction of biological maturation and experiences.	<b>4. Although general progressions of development and learning can be identified, variations due to cultural contexts, experiences, and individual differences must also be considered.</b>
5. Early experiences have profound effects, both cumulative and delayed, on a child's development and learning; optimal periods exist for certain types of development and learning to occur.	<b>5. Children are active learners from birth, constantly taking in and organizing information to create meaning through their relationships, their interactions with their environment, and their overall experiences.</b>
6. Development proceeds toward greater complexity, self-regulation, and symbolic or representational capacities	<b>6. Children's motivation to learn is increased when their learning environment fosters their sense of belonging, purpose, and agency. Curricula and teaching methods build on each child's assets by connecting their experiences in the school</b>

	or learning environment to their home and community settings.
7. Children develop best with secure, consistent relationships with responsive adults and opportunities for positive relationships with peers.	7. Children learn in an integrated fashion that cuts across academic disciplines or subject areas. Because the foundations of subject area knowledge are established in early childhood, educators need subject-area knowledge, an understanding of the learning progressions within each subject area, and pedagogical knowledge about teaching each subject area's content effectively.
8. Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.	8. Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery and when they have many opportunities to reflect on and practice newly acquired skills.
9. Always mentally active in seeking to understand the world around them, children learn in a variety of ways; a wide range of teaching strategies and interactions are effective in supporting all these kinds of learning	9. Used responsibly and intentionally, technology and interactive media can be valuable tools for supporting children's development and learning.
10. Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation as well as for promoting language, cognition, and social competence.	
11. Development and learning advance when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery, and also when they have many opportunities to practice newly acquired skills.	
12. Children's experiences shape their motivation and approaches to learning such as persistence, initiative, and flexibility; in turn, these dispositions and behaviors affect their learning and development.	

## References

A big thank you to Nancy Carlson Page who wrote Young Children in the Digital Age  
[https://dey.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/11/young\\_children\\_in\\_the\\_digital\\_age\\_final\\_final.pdf](https://dey.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/11/young_children_in_the_digital_age_final_final.pdf)  
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Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood has provided this resource – there is a page of resources which I have copied for you below. <https://commercialfreechildhood.org/pf/safe-secure-smartapps/>

Here are journal articles, courtesy of The Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood that demonstrate some of the concerns around technology.

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