

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING: From Easing Stress to Increasing Engagement

## Educating Families About Developmentally Appropriate Practices

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### Our presenter

**Rae Pica**  
 Early Childhood Consultant & Author

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### Today's Objectives

- Understand and overcome the objections and concerns of early childhood educators as programs communicate with families - the vital stakeholders in early childhood education.
- Consider the impact of misinformation with which families struggle as they develop sensitive communication for a gradual shift in their perception.
- Discover resources and methods of communication with families to help them understand the linkage between developmentally appropriate practices and child outcomes.

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### Possible Reasons for Non-Communication

- Concern about "insulting" parents
- Lack of time
- Failure to see its value
- Lack of knowledge of available resources

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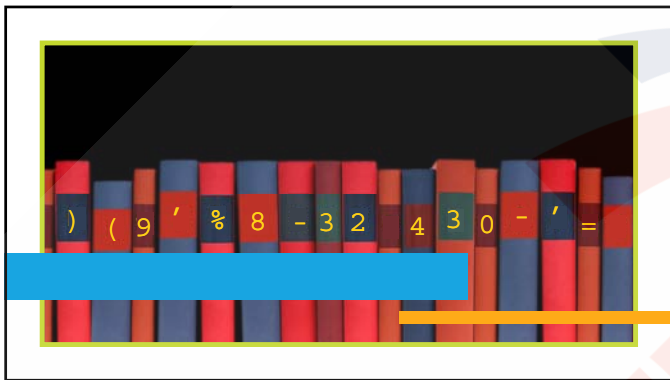
### Why do we have to educate parents about developmentally appropriate practice?

### Why should we make the effort?

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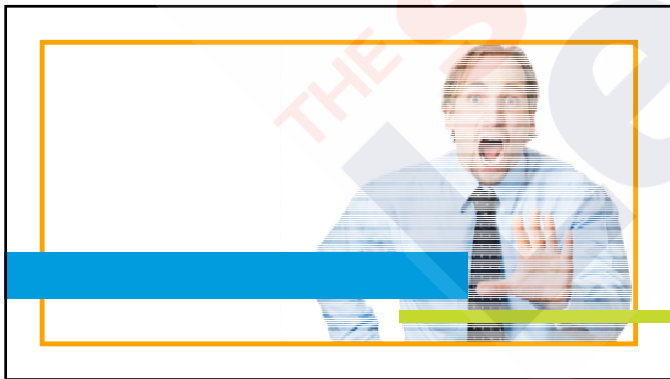


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MYTHS

- Earlier is better.
- Children learn by sitting.
- Digital devices are important to learning.
- Play is a waste of time.



Some of Today's Myths Impacting Children

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MYTHS

### Earlier is Better

This myth has led parents, policymakers, and even teachers to believe:

- Children should be reading by the end of kindergarten - and even earlier.
- Children should experience the kindergarten curriculum in preschool.
- Children should be exposed to "academics" as early as possible.

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MYTHS

### Results of this Myth

- A teacher in an early learning program proudly announced that they were teaching the 3-year-olds a word a week; e.g., words like hypothesis.
- An early learning program repeatedly sent home discouraging notes to the mother of a 3-year-old because he couldn't sit still or properly hold a pencil.
- Four-year-olds asked to draw a picture of their family and write a sentence.
- Four-year-olds required to sit for the entire day doing worksheets.

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Myth: Children Learn By Sitting

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MYTHS

### Results of this Myth

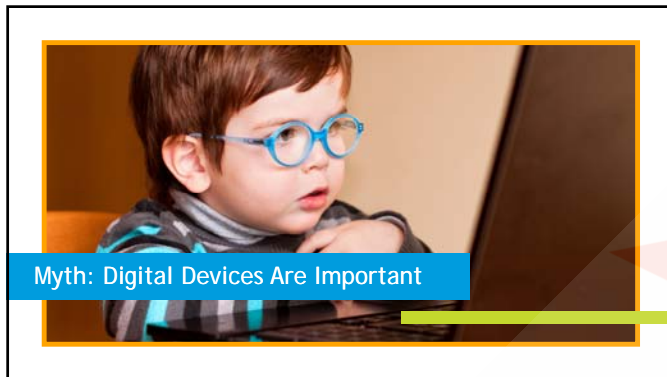
- Children are being denied the opportunity to use their preferred method of learning, which is movement.
- Children are being denied the opportunity to engage multiple senses in the learning process.
- Children fidget due to lack of movement and their inability to concentrate.
- Children are falling out of their chairs!

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### We Retain:

- ▶ 10% of what we READ
- ▶ 20% of what we HEAR
- ▶ 30% of what we SEE
- ▶ 50% of what we HEAR & SEE
- ▶ 70% of what we HEAR, SEE, & SAY
- ▶ 90% of what we HEAR, SEE, SAY, & DO!

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MYTHS

Results of this Myth

- Again, children are being denied the opportunity to learn in the way nature intended.
- Language development is being delayed.
- Children are experiencing less social interaction.
- Screen time has created an epidemic of myopia (near-sightedness).
- As the research catches up, we learn that screen time also creates anxiety, depression, & aggression in children.

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MYTHS

More results of this myth (and others):

- Virtual reality takes precedence over actual reality!
- Today's children have no fine motor skills!

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MYTHS

Results of this Myth

- Children are being denied the opportunity to learn in the way nature intended.
- Children are becoming frustrated, anxious, and depressed.
- Recess and outdoor playtime are being eliminated from schools and early learning program in the belief that they detract from "instructional time."
- Parents are choosing academics-oriented preschools rather than those that are play-based.
- Children no longer know how to play!

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**MYTHS**

**The Good News**

- We know that parents only want the best for their children.
- If we help them to see what's truly "the best," they will become our allies as we try to return early childhood education to what it's supposed to be.



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How do we help families learn what's best?

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**Professional Development Resource**

**BAM! Radio**



[www.bamradionetwork.com](http://www.bamradionetwork.com)

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Professional Development Resource



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**Professional Development Resource**

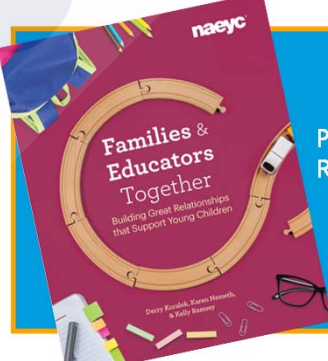
**NAEYC**



<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/family-engagement>

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Professional Development Resource



<https://www.naeyc.org>

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Professional Development Resource

<https://www.redleafpress.org/>

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Professional Development Resource

<https://www.redleafpress.org/>

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**ONGOING COMMUNICATION**

**Possibilities for Ongoing Family Communication**

- Electronic or Printed Newsletters
- Quick Weekly Email
- Get-togethers - with or without Guest Speakers
- Sharing Pertinent Articles
- Book Club
- Online Communication

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**ONGOING COMMUNICATION**

**You Might Also Try**

- Parent bulletin board or easel outside the classroom
- Signs posted on the door parents enter through
- Family mailboxes set up in or just outside the classroom
- Notes on the child\*

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**Apps for Ongoing Communication with Families**

<b>TALKING POINTS</b>	Talking Points is a communications app that attempts to break down language barriers between parents and teachers. These barriers can hinder efforts to give updates and ask questions. Teachers can input messages in English and have the app translate them into dozens of languages. Then, recipients who don't speak English can reply in their native languages. The app offers text-message-like functionality. It works in a more streamlined way than making teachers resort to Google Translate or other methods. Although this app is free, it also has paid tiers available. (Offered for iOS and Android.)
<b>BLOOMZ</b>	Bloomz is a multi-functional messaging app that lets teachers do things like give parents classroom-related updates or send them reminders about things they need to do. There's also a behavior-tracking section and ways for educators to show examples of the kinds of work students are doing during the school day. Also, when teachers send messages to parents, there's no need for them to reveal personal details like email addresses. This app provides basic functionality for free, but there are in-app purchases available. (Offered for iOS and Android.)
<b>REMIND</b>	Like the Talking Points app, Remind allows teachers to translate messages into dozens of languages. However, it can also go further by sending PDFs, photos, and even voice clips. With this app, you can send messages to individuals or groups. The latter option could be handy for class-specific updates. One shortcoming associated with Remind is that it offers only one-way communications—parents cannot respond to the messages. (Offered for iOS and Android.)
<b>SESAME</b>	Sesame is a portfolio and communication tool that makes formative assessment a snap. Bottom line: A useful way for teachers, students, and parents to monitor progress and demonstrate holistic evidence of learning. Grades: Pre-K-12 Price: Free, Paid

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RESOURCE

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BLOG

What if everybody understood child development?

That was the title of the piece I wrote for Huffington Post in 2013. The piece drew such an overwhelming response that I eventually wrote a book with the same title. The book is full of questions similar to the one in the title – like:

- "Why Does Sitting Still Equal Learning?"
- "The Earlier the Better?"
- "When Did a Hug Become a Bad Thing?" and
- "Pudds or Play Dough?"

These questions – all of the essays in the book, in fact – were prompted by the nonsense prevalent in today's educational climate – the stories that indicate to me that many of the adults responsible for "making the rules"




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RESOURCE

Reproducible Parent Letters



EARLIER ISN'T BETTER      THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

<https://www.raepica.com/reproducible-parent-letters/>

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RESOURCE

Reproducible Brochures




<https://www.raepica.com/reproducible-brochures-for-administrators-policymakers/>

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How should you respond when a parent asks a question such as, "Why aren't you teaching my child to read?"

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NAEYC's Teaching Young Children

## Explaining DAP to Families

by Heather Biggar Tomlinson

- 1 Younger children have different learning processes than older children.
- 2 DAP is about making sure children have fun so that they will learn.
- 3 Use play intentionally to ensure each child makes progress toward learning goals.
- 4 Teachers use documentation to show children's progress.

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## Resources

1. Biggar Tomlinson , H. (2016). Explaining Developmentally Appropriate Practice to Families. *Teaching Young Children*. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2015/explaining-developmentally-appropriate-practice>

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## NEXT webinar

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING: From Easing Stress to Increasing Engagement

**The Power of Family-Teacher Conferences in ECE:  
*Understanding the Key Aspects***

Wednesday, April 22, 2020 @ 1:00 PM ET

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**NEW**

### The Virginia Early Childhood Administrator Professional Credential (VA-ECAP)

**ONLINE CREDENTIALING PROGRAM**

The program is a joint offering with Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) that is recognized by NAEYC. Participants earn a combination of credit hours and CEUs.

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