

Experiential Learning: (Hands on, Play Based Learning)

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.” Benjamin Franklin

Environments

- Learning environments that demonstrate developmental and experiential compatibility share 3 characteristics:
 1. They promote active involvement – young children learn by doing,
 2. They are individualized – the unique, individual needs of children are recognized, and
 3. They are child centered – focusing on the child’s total development.
- The best learning environments provide many opportunities for children to see, feel, hear, taste, and smell.
- Concrete materials and activities in learning centers stimulate and foster children’s natural desire to explore and learn about themselves and the world around them.
- Developmental levels, learning styles, family backgrounds, and children’s interests are among the factors that help formulate the learning environment.
- The environment should consist of a variety of learning centers with material and activities that engage children’s unique developmental abilities and interests.

Children

- Children learn by exploring and doing, asking questions, and learning more from resources available to them.
- Children are eager learners who are constantly manipulating and experimenting with their environment while using all of their senses.
- Because young children learn by doing, developmentally appropriate practice calls for concrete, real and relevant learning activities.
- The young child’s emotional and social development is promoted and supported through interaction with adults and peers.
- Experiential learning for young children is facilitated through play.

Teachers

- The role of the teacher in an experiential learning environment is that of facilitator.
- The teacher intentionally sets up the learning environment and creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom.
- The teacher constructs a learning environment that welcomes exploration and has meaningful and necessary limits, rather than arbitrary limits that inhibit creativity.
- The teacher expresses joy in learning and models curiosity; becoming an explorer and learning along with the children.
- The teacher provides feedback to the children that is specific and descriptive, but not evaluative.
- Teachers are attentive and recognize the “teachable moments” and ask questions or offer alternative problem solving solutions.
- Teachers encourage children to take ownership of their own learning. This helps children to motivate themselves and places the center of control within the child.