12 Principles of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

What makes an effective teacher?

1. All domains, or areas, of development and learning are important. These include physical, social and emotional, cognitive (or thinking) and language domains. What happens in one domain affects the others.
2. Many parts of children’s learning and development follow predictable sequences that have been recorded. Skills knowledge and abilities that children have, become the foundation for later learning.
3. Development and learning happen at different rates from child to child. Also, within a particular child there are uneven rates of development in the different domains.
4. Within each child there is an ongoing interaction between what that child is born with and what experiences that he or she has. This is always happening.
5. The experiences that a child has early in life be they good or bad, have later effects on development and learning. We also know that there are best times for learning many things, such as speech and social skills.
6. Development goes from the simpler to the more complex and difficult in all domains or areas of learning.
7. Children develop best when they feel warm and secure in relationships with adults who take notice of them. They also need time for happy relationships with other children.
8. Children grow and learn in a number of social and cultural contexts such as family, community, religion, school etc. They are shaped by these things.
9. Children are always active in their minds and trying to understand their world. They also learn in many different ways. Therefore a wide variety of teaching approaches and ways of being together is best for learning.
10. Play provides an important way to build thinking, language and, most importantly, social skills.
11. Development and learning happen best when children have a challenge that is just beyond where their skills are at the moment. They also need the time and place to practice these new skills many times. Play is good for this.
12. What children experience at home and especially at school affects how they think and feel about learning. Happy, challenging and successful experiences make for good feelings and ideas about learning. This is how children develop positive dispositions towards learning.