**Philosophy Paper**

**Submitted to**

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In the field of early childhood education we hold a certain set of beliefs when it comes to the care and education of young children. Our Ideas highlight what we consider to be important in our profession and what we believe is essential for children in order for them to have the best possible learning experience. Our beliefs and ideas, in regards to best practice, together make up a philosophy. Our philosophy beings with our belief that educators need to plan, implement, observe and evaluate activities for children. It is through these activities that children learn. In addition to teaching children educators also need to focus on the well-being of children ensuring their basic needs are always being met.

We believe that children are capable and competent, have absorbent minds and take in what they learn through their play experiences. Children are curious, full of wonder and need to explore to discover and learn. Children are creative, imaginative and unique. We as educators need to allow for children to have endless opportunities to explore and experiment with activities so that they can learn through their many experiences. It is important for activities to be open ended, process oriented, developmentally appropriate and relate to the children’s interests. First an educator may pick a topic that is of interest to children for example you may notice children discussing cats so that will be something you choose to expand their learning about. When planning an open ended activity educators consider what materials they can provide to the children and how they might use them to learn without having a desired final product or outcome. For example in practicum when planning art activities we may put out glue and cat pictures so children can choose to create a cat collage or they may decide to use the glue as paint and make an artwork that way instead. Process orientated activities also focus on process rather than product. Children in different age categories have developed a certain set of skills and may not all be able to participate in the same activities so it is the educators’ job to ensure that they plan an activity that is appropriate for children of all ages in the program. During my art activity planning in practicum I had to plan an activity easy enough for a sixteen month old but is also of interest for children up to age five. Activities should allow children to develop in social, physical, emotional, creative and intellectual domains. When planning an activity an educator may write down some developmental objectives to ensure that the activities are in fact helping children develop. Examples of developmental objectives are during the gluing activity children are able to communicate with peers, strengthen hands while squeezing glue bottles, feel pride in their process, choose how to use materials and learn about the properties of glue and how it attaches items. The activities should set up in an aesthetically pleasing environment that is warm and inviting to the children. In my program we use play area boards to introduce the topic with colorful letters, borders and pictures. We also cover the tables with table cloths related to the chosen topic and include a centerpiece to tie everything together. I have noticed in different programs how activity sections that are not visually appealing are visited less frequently by the children.

We believe that the educators’ role is to initiate, participate, guide/motivate, encourage/respond, intervene/troubleshoot and observe during implementation of activities. To initiate an activity an educator may simple place materials at the activity section however sometimes we might need to give brief statement or explanation of materials. Educators may also use provocations for play such as open ended questions to spark the child’s creativity and inspire them to participate. Educators will need to sit with the children and participate in use of the materials. Some children will need to be shown how to use materials but not modeled at a level above their capability. You may have to squeeze a large amount of glue on a piece of paper and place an image into it to show how glue works. Children may need guidance during an activity specifically if they are having a hard time participating. You may choose to create a more comfortable environment by describing to them what you like about a childs art. Rather than saying just “good job” explain specifically that you like how they used a variety of images and spaced them out well. By explaining what you like about their process you give them motivation and encouragement to continue their participation in the activity without feeling discouraged. Safety is always a concern with children and it is important for the educator to watch closely to ensure that the environment is safe. Children may also begin to feel emotional and if this happens or an activity is unsafe the educator may have to step in and fix the situation. Educators should always be observing activities and recording information about how it goes. Educators may evaluate if and how their developmental objectives where met in order to think about how they can change the activity if objectives are not met and ensure the childs development. Also during reflections educators will explain the childrens response to the activity evaluating which aspects worked, which didn’t and how they may change and or better the activity.

We also believe that educators should later document their observations, reflections and evaluations to ensure that their learning and children’s is made visible to the child and their family members. Educators may take photographs as a form of documentation so that they are able to keep the memory and continue to reflect upon it. Learning storied and documentation boards are ways of presenting photographs along with script to children and or family members that allow for a Childs learning or development to me shown and explained in professional language by the educator. The photo graphs help children to remember the experience and give family the chance to see their Childs play experiences and learning moments. It is the educator’s script that helps parents and children make sense of what the picture is showcasing and gives them in depth information on how and why the children were able to learn what they did. When documenting a Childs learning moments educators may refer to the curriculum frame work to connect the outlined holistic goals to the experience of the children therefor allowing parents and the educator to reflect on what facets are being developed by the children.

In addition to the childrens learning educators will also need to focus on health and well-being of the child. We believe that custodial care is a part of the childrens education. For children to be able to learn they need first to be happy and healthy. Children need to eat, sleep and bath regularly in order to maintain their physical health. Children also require respect and for adults to show caring and compassion as well as develop healthy relationships so that they can well emotionally stable. Childrens basic needs have to be met in order for them to be capable of learning. If a child is sick, in pain or emotional they will not be able to learn as they do when they are healthy.

We believe in implementing practices which allows for the best possible learning experience of the child. We care very much about the childrens learning and believe that an educators role is to plan and implement activities which are open ended, process oriented, developmentally appropriate and of interest to children. We believe that educators need to be present and participate with the children in activities. We believe that observing and recording data helps to ensure that children are developing and learning through their play experience and that in order to learn the Childs basic needs have to be met. We want children to have endless opportunities to play, explore, experiment and discover so that they may learn. Our philosophy in early childhood education revolves around the belief that children are mighty learners capable of most things and eager to learn. We as educators need to facilitate a Childs need to learn by providing them with whatever they need whether it be materials, guidance/motivation or basic care educators are there to help a child through their experiences.

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