



NAECTE--Statement of Support of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

As members of the executive board and body of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE), we stand in solidarity with recent statements released by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)'s president Natalia Vega O'Neil, Chief Executive Officer, Michelle Kang, and other educators in regard **to support of NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)** (Friedman et al., 2021). DAP represents one of the most valuable resources representing what is appropriate for the education of young children. It does not represent a specific curriculum for children but is a guide for all educators to use in the care of young children based upon the most up-to-date research about children's physical, cognitive, and social emotional developmental needs and the needs of their families, programs, and communities. Opposition to the NAEYC DAP was purportedly made because of the document's encouragement for "teachers to be aware of inequities, implicit bias, and the diverse backgrounds of children in order to be better teachers and create welcoming environments for their students" (Stephenson, 2023 April 21, para. 6). Teachers need to be aware of the conditions that surround children in order to provide support for their unique needs and formation of a positive identity toward themselves and others.

As NAECTE, we denounce any state officials dictating, banning, or limiting early childhood educators' views and practices, and enforcing harmful policies. NAEYC's statement in response to the challenge against DAP is their message and our belief that "*We stand behind the principles of DAP. We trust the expertise and experiences of early childhood educators working with families to ensure young children can learn and thrive in our diverse world. And we bring our voices together to provide clarity and support for our continued, collective work to ensure that all young children can access high-quality, developmentally-appropriate early learning experiences across all states, settings, and communities.*" Please join us and [sign in support of DAP in Early Childhood Education](#).

In the NAECTE Speak Out and Move to Action 2020 statement, we shared that "*We believe we must develop teachers' abilities to mastery with culturally inclusive perspectives in practice ensuring that our approaches and activities support the children and each child's family within the community, cultural, and custom context; advance equity through integrated curriculum that promotes world perspective as unique and valued; provide racially and culturally diverse field experience contexts where learning, education, teaching approaches, responsiveness, and guidance are different in value and application from one's own upbringing; foster community building to break down any racial, gender, or socioeconomic bias in learning ability, critical thinking, or socialization that could hamper the ability of the teacher to positively influence children's social, emotional, and academic realization in culturally responsive ways.*" Then, and now, members of NAECTE continue to stand in unity with our principles and ethical values in supporting NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice framework.



Developmentally Appropriate Practice has been the framework that guides early childhood teacher preparation and classroom practices for decades. It includes the term *appropriate* to mean suitable, aligned with, and in parallel to children’s developmental stages. Three dimensions are covered under this term: individual appropriateness, cultural appropriateness, and age appropriateness. Having a developmental framework is described as a quality criteria in research and practice (Adams et al., 2017). We believe strongly that developmentally appropriate practices have guided decision making at the classroom, school, state, and national levels to support families and children and will continue to do so.

In summary, as faculty and educators representing early childhood teacher education from every state in the United States and 4 other countries (Canada, Japan, Singapore and Jamaica), we strongly oppose any efforts toward the removal of NAEYC’s Developmentally Appropriate Practice as a resource for the early care and education of young children. We implore state and policy decision-makers to familiarize themselves with the document so that they may see the profound depth of knowledge and guidance it holds toward the education of all young children and its potential effect upon their prospective levels of stability, happiness, and success as citizens of our country.

We invite early childhood teacher educators, teachers, families, and our community to work together, to develop resources, to speak out, and to enact equity in their schools and learning communities and continue to support Developmentally Appropriate Practices. We ask that you join us on our [NAECTE Facebook page](#) to build a robust resource library to draw on and aid in our and our students’ actions as social change agents and advocates for Developmentally Appropriate Practices. As a profession we have a framework, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, that was developed over decades and is based on sound research and evidence. It serves as the foundation for high-quality Early Childhood Education, a goal we have for *ALL* young children and their families.

The NAECTE Board

References:

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