

The Emergent Approach From Beginning to Beginning

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Our goals for the evening

- Consider a program planning process that is responsive to children's development and interests.
- Think about the role of the environment, our beliefs about children, and our attitudes toward teaching.
- Reflect on the importance of play-based learning.
- Learn more about Early Learning for Every Child Today, a framework and resource to support our observation and planning.
- Supporting and sustaining curriculum change.

Our activities

- Dialogue and discussion
- Personal reflection
- Learning stories
- Planning

Introductions and Dialogue: Remembering your childhood spaces.

Emergent Approach Fundamentals

- Planned but not “canned”
- Children are fundamentally competent
- The planning process leads to activities and interactions which respond to children’s development, *and;*
- Relate to children’s interests
- Play-based
- Focus of the teacher is play facilitation
- Group times are an opportunity to plan and reflect with children; and/or further their exploration through song, story

Cornerstone 1: Environment

- ECERS-R (ITERS, SACERS, FCCERS)
- Create activity areas which say “*come and play*”
- “*Environment is the third teacher*”

Cornerstone 2:

Schedule to support play-based learning

- *Maximize* play and limit disruption by incorporating seamless transitions and providing even longer play periods.
- *At minimum* 1 full, seamless hour per half day for play.
- Short group times (e.g. 15 minutes at end of half day for gathering, planning or reflection)

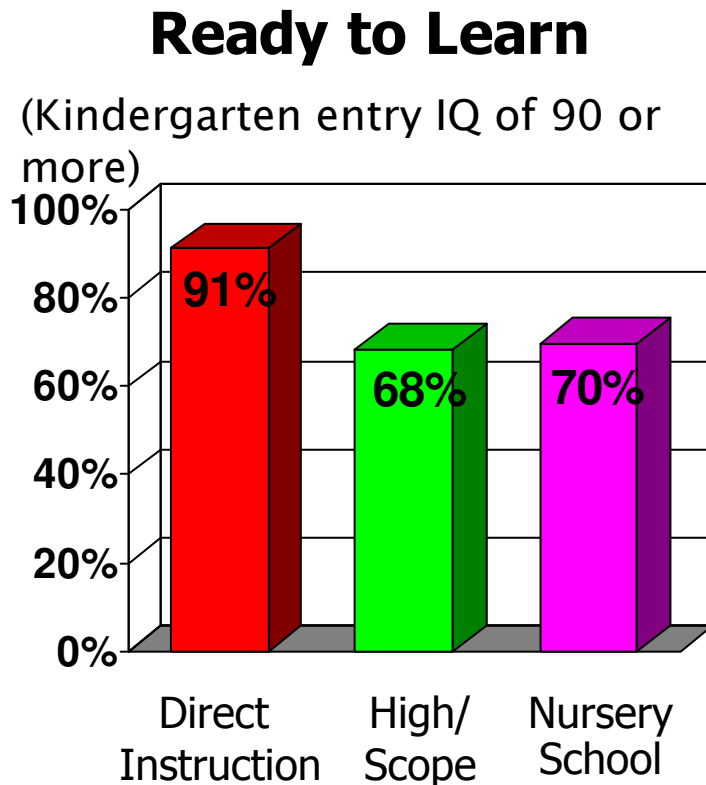
Save the Day for Play – (Working Draft – ASCY)

- Quick assessment
- Supplements ECERS, ITERS, SACERS

Barriers and challenges to implementing play-based learning.

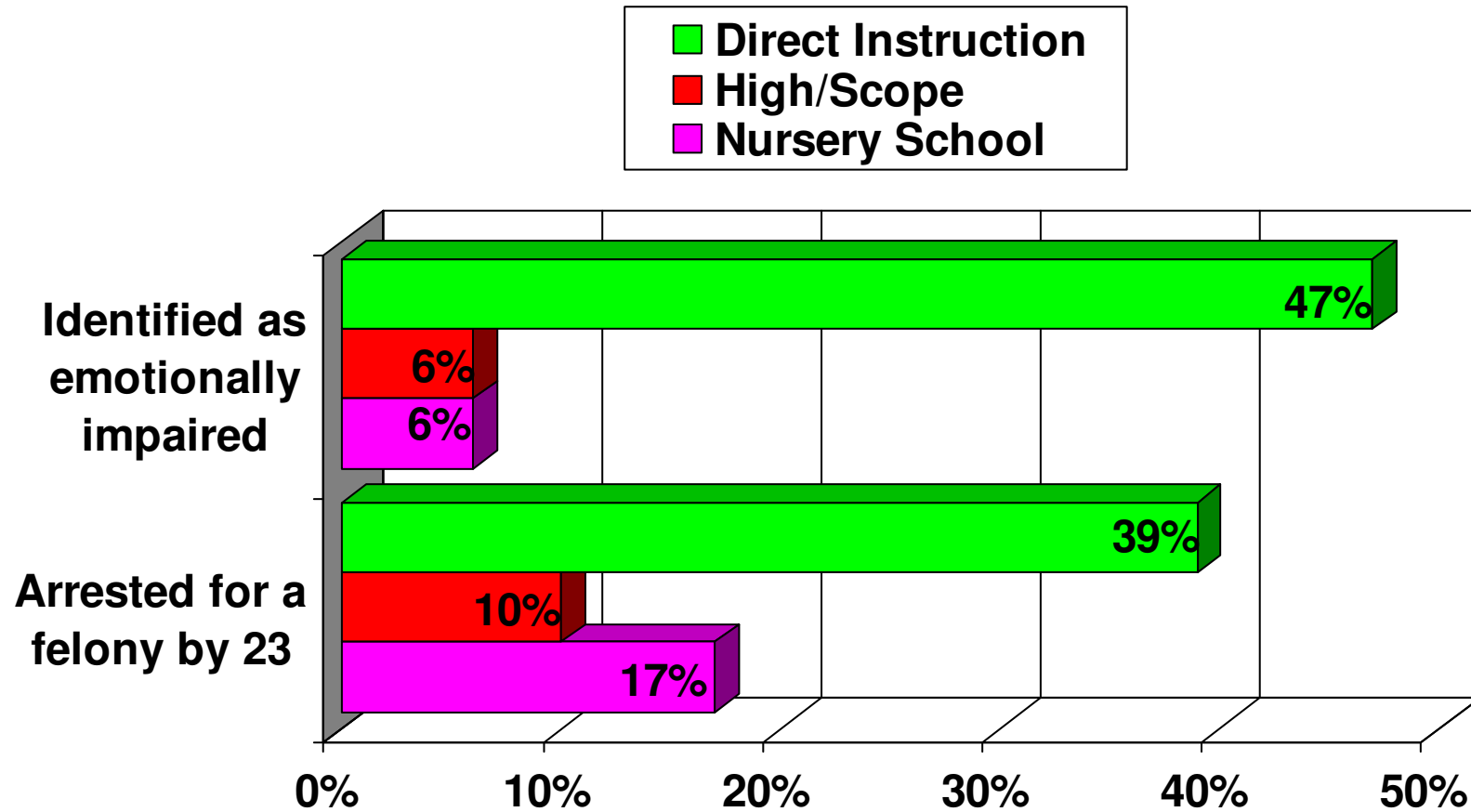


Direct Instruction looked good in the short run . . .



Direct Instruction made 9 out of 10 children intellectually ready for school; child-initiated activities made 7 out of 10 ready.

But bad in the long run



Play is the way a child explores his world, builds skills, exercises his imagination, and learns through experiences.

Weather / calendar circle vs. a discussion in a beautiful, natural outdoor play area? Which works for you?

Cornerstone 3: Children

- Beliefs about children
- Children are co-contributors in the planning process
- Children construct their own learning
- Observations of children inform the planning process

Cornerstone 4: Knowledgeable and Responsive Early Childhood Educators

- Sound knowledge of child development
- Relationship with children and others
- Environment is the third teacher
- Reflect on own beliefs about teaching: facilitator vs. instructor

Early Learning for Every Child Today

- Validated by current research
- Provides a common vision
- Principles for practice
- Resources to support practice

“Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children’s natural curiosity and exuberance.”

Early Learning for Every Child Today

The developmental literature is clear: play stimulates physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development in the early years.

Children need time, space, materials, and the support of informed parents and thoughtful, skilled early childhood educators in order to become master players. They need time to play for the sake of playing.

Jane Hewes(2006) Let the Children Play

Today's Play Landscape

Lifestyle changes have brought about a crisis for children and play – play is not a simple matter for many of today's children.

Over scheduling and Over facilitating

- Studies have found that the average child's free time has dropped from 40% to 25% of their day
- Children today are in formal, scheduled, adult-driven activities earlier than ever before
- Play with peers often takes place in adult-arranged play groups – highly supervised by adults

Play Under Siege

- Our culture is becoming increasingly focused on the achievement of functional skills
- Child-centred, play-based learning has lost ground to adult-directed, instruction-based approaches which do not respond to the science of early years development.

The Emergent Approach Process

Step 1: Observation

- Observe child development
- Look, listen, learn from the children
- What developmental indicators are present or emerging?
- Focus on assets
- ELF Continuum of Development can be your guide.

Step 2 A – Planning with the Children

Share your observation with children and/or;

- Provoke interest.
- *“What do we know about....(topic / issue)”?*
- *“What would we like to know?”* or *“What problem do we have?”*
- *“What questions do we have?”*
- *“How will we find out?”*
- *“What will we need?”*

Step 2 B: Educator planning and prep

- How will activity areas be enhanced? (not necessarily changed)
- Accessories, materials for play
- Plan for teacher's play interactions
- Predict children's play interactions
- ELF Continuum

Step 3: Enhance the environment

- Add accessories to activity areas
- Inject a sense of “wonder”.
- Make it say, “*Come and play*”

Step 4: Observe and reflect Document to make observations visible to others.

- What's happening?
- How can I make it visible to others? (photos, journal, art)
- Should we adapt anything?
- What next?
- Update the plan (steps 1,2,3)
- Educators and children are co-observers, reflectors and planners.

Sample starting point based on observations of children's interests.

- Bugs
- Dirt
- Fire trucks
- Shopping carts
- Fishing
- Balls

Sample starting point based on
observations of development
(*focus on assets*).

- Social – sustaining play with others
- Emotional – seeing self as a valued member of the group
- Cognition – using objects to stand for things, pretending to be someone else
- Communication, Language and Literacy – using new words in play
- Physical – coordination, speed and endurance

Take one step.....

Save the day for play!

Supporting and sustaining curriculum change

- Learn with others
- Find space for everyone on the continuum of change.
- Construct a strong scaffold rather than rely on a high speed elevator.

Making children's learning visible.

- Build in time for peer reflection on observations and documentation, perhaps at network or team meetings.
- Celebrate children: Examples: publish their books, art auction, display documentation, take their questions to the community.

Create a community culture for emergent learning.

- Sample network meeting dialogue.
- Review the topics proposed for the agenda.
- Reflect on how things are going – successes and challenges.
- “What do we know about the topic?”
- “What questions do we have?”
- “Are there problems or issues?”
- “How will we explore the topic or the solutions?”
- “What resources do we need?”
- “When will we meet again to review and go further?”



“Bloom where you’re planted”

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