Rigor in Preschool and Kindergarten for ALL Children

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Marylee Sease, Kindergarten Demonstration Program Teacher, Haywood County

Carla Garrett, NCDPI Education Consultant
Learning Outcomes

Participants will increase knowledge about effective/recommended practices for young children and discuss strategies for implementation.

– Research
– Concrete examples of rigorous practices
– Strategies for support
-What are effective/recommended instructional practices?

-How do you create a rigorous learning environment?

-What do you need to know to support rigor?
Setting the Stage
What Do We Know?

The early childhood years (birth – age 8) are the most powerful years for learning, growth and development and are a very sensitive time for brain development.
Important Connections are Made Prior to School-Entry

90% of brain growth occurs before kindergarten

What Do We Know?

Development is occurring in all domains and because of this, young children need a wide variety of engaging and appropriately challenging environments and experiences during this phase, including nurturing and supportive adults.

Advancement in one developmental domain is dependent on and influential in development of others.
Developmentally Appropriate Practice means teaching young children in ways that meet them where they are and helps them reach challenging and achievable goals. (Phillips & Scrinzi, 2013; Copple & Bredekamp 2009)

Practices are based on content learning standards and child development
DEC Recommended Practices

• **DAP**: The foundation of quality programs for ALL young children and families (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009)

• **DEC Recommended Practices**: Children with delays/disabilities often need more specialized practices

**Purpose**: Highlight practices known to promote outcomes for children who have or are at risk for delays/disabilities
If...Then...
The research is consistent...

Teachers must be **intentional** as they

- work to provide effective, **developmentally appropriate** instruction
- **Interact** with children in engaging, challenging and appropriate environments (DEC INS13)
- provide support through **regular and consistent monitoring** of children’s achievement across all developmental domains (DEC A9)

(Bowman, Donovan, & Burns)
How do you *INVITE* Young Children to Learn?

- Welcoming, nurturing, safe environment (DEC E1; INS2)
- Guidance from trusted & intentional adults (DEC INT4; INS4)
- Integrated learning opportunities focused on content standards and 5 domains of development (DEC INS4)
- Balance of learning contexts & strategies (DEC INS5)
How do you *INVITE* Young Children to learn?

- Active, engaging & playful activities (DEC INS1)
- Purposeful, relevant, & meaningful experiences
- Opportunities for discovery, exploration, & practice
- Opportunities to make choices & regulate own behaviors (DEC INT5)
- Achievable yet challenging experiences (DEC INT5)
Rigor Brainstorming: What IS Rigor?

• Record ideas about “rigor” – 1 thought per sticky note
• Sort & classify – give groups of similar ideas a heading
• Generate a team definition
• Group sharing
RIGOR

- Variety of strategies & resources
- Project-based learning
- Authentic assessment
- Collaboration
- Constructivist
- Discourse and Dialogue
- Progressively deepens understanding of concepts
- Challenging, yet achievable
- Critical thinking
- Problem Solving
- Real-world
- Meaningful
- Standards-based
- Initiative & Self Direction
- Creativity and Innovation
- Intentional & Purposeful

Public Schools of North Carolina
Rigor & DAP can Co-Exist

Academic Rigor

• Focuses on 1 dimension
  … academics

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

• Cognitive (academics)
• Motivational
• Cultural
• Social
• Emotional
• Health & Physical
• Approaches to Learning

“Rigor and DAP are divorced concepts that need to remarry.”
(Vincent Constanza, 6.6.2016, NAEYC PDI)
Why is DAP Rigorous?

Developmentally appropriate practice uses developmental theory to promote instruction that focuses on the growth and learning of individual children across all developmental domains in a manner that addresses “the social and cultural contexts” in which they live (Copple & Bredekamp 2009, 10).
Why is DAP Rigorous?

- Process of working with all children – addresses the **whole child** through interactive learning experiences that **challenge the mind & connect learning to real world context**

- Child has **intentional support** from teacher to achieve goals/standards

  (Washor & Mojkowski 2006/2007)

  (DEC INS4)
Why is DAP Rigorous?

Teachers:

– provide children with **multiple learning opportunities** to gain knowledge/skills needed

– **build on** content of instruction and **increase performance expectations** for children as the year progresses

(DEC INS3; INT5)
Why is DAP Rigorous?

Teachers:

–use authentic, formative assessment opportunities to inform instruction (DEC A9)
DEC Recommended Practice: Instruction

• **INS1—Identify** each child’s strengths, preferences, and interests to *engage* the child in active learning

• **INS2—Identify skills** to target for instruction that help the child become adaptive, competent, socially connected, and *engaged* that promote learning in natural/inclusive environments
DEC Recommended Practice: Instruction

• INS3-Gather & use data to inform decisions about individualized instruction
• INS4-Plan for & provide the level of support, accommodations, & adaptations needed for the child to access, participate, & learn within & across activities and routines
DEC Recommended Practice: Instruction

• INS5-**Embed instruction** within and across routines, activities, and environment to provide **contextually relevant** learning opportunities
Rigor In Action

What should rigor look like when observing in a classroom? Children deeply engaged in meaningful activities & projects through playful experiences (Constanza).
Examples of Rigor – Small Group

• **Revisit** your group’s definition of “rigor”

• **Record** evidence/examples of developmentally appropriate practices that are aligned with your definition

• **Share** ideas with whole group
Examples to Ponder
Community Helpers

Dentist
Police Officer
Firefighter
Mail Carrier

BINGO: Community Helpers

BINGO

Public Schools of North Carolina
Juliana Harris, NC Kindergarten Demonstration Teacher
East End Elementary, Martin County Schools
What is a HERO?

- strong
- saves lives
- helpful
- smart
- special
- uniform
- special powers
- flies
- Super heroes
- keeps people safe
- good listeners
- others
- encouraging
- helping
- respecting
- others

What does a hero look like?

- strong with big muscles
- have a cape
- magic powers
- special costume
- my dad (Christian)
- don't give up
- my sister (Jamiah) because she helps
- my daddy (Ra'Miyah)
- my dad (Trey)
- girls and boys
- anybody can be a hero
We wonder...

Why do they have dalmations? (Trey) Mostly in movies and stories

How do you know when to ring the fire bell? (Brianna) Special radio that sends a signal and message

How do they know which house to go to? (Christian) The message tells the address

Why do you wear helmets? (To protect us from fire and falling objects)

How do you get in a fire truck? (Camari) The front doors - the back doors hold tools

How do you put gas in the truck?

What will we see on our trip?

- fire truck
- ambulance
- ladder
- fireman
- fire hose
- where they sleep
- how they clean
- police cars
- books
- houses
- computers
- cars
- train tracks
When we got back, we drew pictures of what we learned.

I learned that you walk through the door to go. I saw the firetruck. The old firetruck had a bell you can ring.

Inside the firetrucks there is lots of equipment. I saw 3 axes.

The fire truck had a lot of things on it. I saw the hoses on top and I saw the doors where they keep stuff.

I learned that if there is a fire at my house I get out!
Where’s the Rigor?
RIGOR

- Variety of strategies & resources
- Project-based learning
- Authentic assessment
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- Progressively deepens understanding of concepts
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More about Rigor...

• Rigor

— When instruction is academically rigorous, students actively explore, research, and solve problems to develop a deep understanding of core academic principles.

-adapted from Dr. Sharon Ritchie, Frank Porter Graham
...and Relevance

• Relevance

– When content is presented in a way that allows students to relate that information to real-world experiences it strengthens their grasp of the knowledge and allows for greater retention of material taught. In addressing relevance, students are more engaged because they see purpose in learning.

-adapted from Dr. Sharon Ritchie, Frank Porter Graham
Individual Reflection

• Are developmentally appropriate practices reflected in your classrooms?

• What supports are already in place to help teachers implement appropriate practices?

• What supports need to be in place?

• What is your next step?
• Challenges

• Successful Strategies
NC’s Demonstration Program

Vision Statement:

• Pre-Kindergarten Classes
• Kindergarten Classes

http://www.ncpublicschools.org/earlylearning/demo/
Demonstration Program: Mission

Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten
Lead by modeling, sharing, promoting, and articulating effective learning environments, curricula, and instructional practices
Guided Observations

- Professional Development Process
- Visitors select areas of early childhood practice they are interested in observing and discussing

Commonalities:
- Pre Observation Discussion
- Guided Observation
- Post Observation Discussion
Transition

Clear connections and alignment between the preschool years and kindergarten

– PK and K teachers are familiar with each other’s standards

– PK and K teachers are able to connect the related content with standards

– Smooth transition with shared knowledge of children’s strengths
Interesting Demo Facts…

• 8 of 14 teachers National Board Certified
• All classes have children with disabilities
• Preschool ECERS scores: 5.65-6.36
• Preschool star rated license:
  All classes 5 stars
• Preschool funding: Title I, EC,
  NC Pre-K, Dev Day, Fee for Service
  Demo teachers led 56 PD sessions
  with 1,554 total participants
NAEYC’s Young Children

http://www.naeyc.org/yc/professional-dev-demo-program
NC OEL Pre-K & Kindergarten Demonstration Program

Public Schools of North Carolina
Questions/Comments

Evaluations: http://inclusioninstitute.fpg.unc.edu/2017-institute-evaluations
Contact Information

Carla Garrett
Education Consultant
NCDPI
carla.garrett@dpi.nc.gov

Marylee Sease
K Demonstration Program Teacher
Haywood County Schools
msease@haywood.k12.nc.us