

Key Knowledge of Early Childhood Development

EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA

CORE ASPECTS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Created for any positive adult in the life of a child, the Iowa Core Knowledge of Child Development lays out eight notable aspects of early childhood learning and development. Whether a parent, guardian, grandparent, child care provider, retail employee, medical provider, or anything else, utilize the eight core aspects to expand and improve your response to the children in your life.

All Areas of Development and Learning are Important

All the areas of development and learning - physical, social and emotional, and mental - are important, and are closely connected. Children's development and learning in one area influence and are influenced by what takes place in other areas. All areas of development and learning are essential to children's lives and to their future success as members of society.

Balanced Nutrition, Adequate Sleep, and Physical Activity Help Children Grow

These help to set the stage for healthy habits and life-long learning. Well-child visits with a consistent healthcare provider are important for ensuring that a child's physical, cognitive and social development, immunizations, oral health, vision, and hearing are on track. Regular visits to the dentist help ensure children's teeth and gums are developing in healthy ways. Like all areas of child development, health and wellbeing must be considered within the context of each individual child.

Children are Influenced by Their Family, Community, and Cultural Experiences

Children are most influenced by their own family. Children learn about the world and what has value from their family. A family's parenting and expectations of their child affect the child's future social and school success. A child's development is also heavily influenced by their community and cultural experiences.

Children Develop Best When They Have Secure and Positive Relationships

Children develop best when they have secure, consistent relationships with responsive adults and opportunities for positive relationships with other children. From the earliest years of life, warm, nurturing relationships with responsive adults are necessary for many key areas of children's development, including empathy and cooperation, self-regulation and cultural socialization, language and communication, peer relationships, and identity formation.

Children Learn in a Variety of Ways

Children's brains and bodies are always active in seeking to understand the world around them. Children learn in a variety of ways and from all their experiences. A wide range of parenting strategies and parent-child interactions support all kinds of learning.

Early Experiences and Relationships Have Profound Effects on Brain Development

Children's early experiences, whether positive or negative, are cumulative. For example, a child's experiences with other children in the first five years may help him or her develop social skills and confidence that help him or her to make friends later, and these experiences also help the child's social and school success.

Learning and Development Occur in a Specific Order, but at Different Rates

Many areas of children's learning and development happen in order, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those the child already has. At the same time, development and learning proceed at different rates from child to child, as well as at uneven rates across different areas of one child's learning and growth.

Play is Learning

Children of all ages love to play, and it gives them opportunities to develop physical competence and enjoyment of the outdoors, understand and make sense of their world, interact with others, express and control emotions, develop their symbolic and problem-solving abilities, and practice emerging skills. Research shows the links between play and foundational capacities such as memory, self-regulation, oral language abilities, social skills, and success in school.