

• **Suitable environment includes**

- A classroom with centres and group area furniture
- A school with a playground and playground structures that focus on safety

• **Effective grouping practices include**

- Opportunities for individual, small group and large group activities

• **Consistent daily schedules include**

- Classroom routines
- Posted daily schedules
- Majority of time spent with one teacher

• **Parent involvement includes**

- Welcoming environment
- Shared decision-making
- Supportive practices



Stegelin, 2004, indicates that over 20 years of research has identified the following characteristics of high-quality early childhood education.

- Nurturing
- Hands-on
- Stimulating
- Exploratory
- Integrates interactive learning across the curriculum
- Holistic

In their research, Alexander and Entwisle, 1988, and Slavin, Karweit and Madden, 1989, indicate that, “Studies demonstrate that children’s success or failure during the first years of school often predicts the course of later schooling.”

*These authors’ reports are available upon request.*



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# Early Years



## Understanding Early Years Children

### **Physical development includes**

- Learning large muscle skills like jumping, running and skipping
- Learning small muscle skills like cutting, pasting and coloring

### **Intellectual development includes**

- Increasing ability to think and to solve problems

### **Emotional /Social development includes**

- Learning to identify, express and control feelings and how to relate to others

### **Language development includes**

- Learning words, rhythms, signs and symbols

Voices for Children, Child and Family Canada: Fact Sheet #4, September 2000.



## Early Childhood Education

- Young children benefit from a consistent routine or daily schedule.
- Young children function best in early childhood programs that value and reinforce continuity.
- Children learn through their senses; learning activities must be concrete, real and relevant.
- Children should be given the opportunity to explore, discover, create and interact with their environment.
- Children learn best at their own pace in a non-biased environment that is nurturing, supportive, and replete with developmentally appropriate activities.
- Learning environments should be rich with opportunities for children to communicate and develop self control.
- Learning environments should facilitate the development of self-esteem; children should be respected, accepted and comforted.
- Children learn most effectively in a social setting with other learners, one which develops a sense of community.
- The curriculum should focus on the whole child and provide for all areas of development: social, emotional, intellectual and physical.
- The early childhood years are the most important developmental years of a person's life.

## Effective Early Years Programs Have:

### Quality Staff who have:

- Experience and training in early years education
- Knowledge of child development
- The ability to partner with parents
- Time to interact with students and parents

### Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum:

- Includes a broad range of content across disciplines, which are socially relevant, intellectually engaging and personally meaningful
- Builds upon what children already know
- Plans for frequent integration across traditional subject matter divisions
- Promotes knowledge and understanding, processes and skills; and the use and application of skills

### Assessment should be:

- Ongoing, strategic and purposeful and informs the learning and instruction that takes place in the classroom
- Assisting in recognizing developmental changes and communication with parents
- Supporting assessment for learning and assessment of learning, involving both the student and the teacher.
- Gathered through a variety of methods including observations, conversations and products

