

What to Look for in a Developmentally Appropriate Classroom

This document outlines key actions that would be seen during various times in the schedule in a developmentally appropriate early childhood classroom. Many of the actions are from the [2013 Danielson Framework for Teaching](#) with early learning examples.

From NAEYC's [Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Focus on Kindergartners](#), a developmentally appropriate kindergarten classroom using a play-based learning model

- Is purposefully and intentionally planned by the teacher to address standards.
- Balances teacher-directed and child-led activities.
- Provides active, hands-on experiential learning.
- Integrates learning across multiple domains.
- Allows sufficient time for child-initiated activities.
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Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5: 1= little knowledge, 3= somewhat implemented, 5= thoroughly implemented

When Visiting a Classroom	The teacher is likely to...	The students are likely to...	Self Rating	My Next Steps
Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model pro-social behavior with warm greetings to individual students by name (2a) • Remind students of class expectations (2a) • Listen to and inquire about students' background and lives outside the classroom (1b, 2a) • Collect social and communication evidence with anecdotal notes, photos, checklist (1e, 1f, 3d) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow arrival routines such as sign-in, Question of the Week (2c) • Self-manage their belongings (2c) • Express thoughts and needs to the teacher and peers (2a) 		
Morning Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to build off each other's ideas (2d) • Use rich language (3a) • Use music and movement (3a) • Explain the learning plan for the day, including special events, etc. (3a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather in assigned spot and participate in waiting activities (books, conversations, etc.) (2a) • Actively participate (3c) 		

<p>Whole Group Instruction</p> <p>(Literacy, Writing, Math, Social Studies or Science)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link the instructional purpose of this lesson to current unit of study or curriculum (3a) • Limit the large group time to 15-20 minutes with frequent brain or body breaks (3c) • Use the cycle of <i>I do, We do, You do</i> (3c) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Model new learning ○ Use students to model the new learning ○ Give time for students to practice • Use Turn and Talk and Think, Pair, Share to discuss a topic (3b) • Offers prompts to scaffold learning during partner work (3b) • Collect evidence on communication and cognitive skills during partner work (3d) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in listening and speaking behaviors (1e, 2a) • Share ideas (1e, 2a) • Participate in partner conversations (1e, 3a) 		
<p>Transitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare students for a transition (2c) • Use music, chants, visual signals for transitions (2c) • Monitor student behavior (2d) • Use proximity and signals to silently or subtly remind students of expectations (2d) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Echo the teacher's stated expectations and remind friends (2c) • Follow directions with minimal reminders (2c) 		
<p>Learning Centers</p> <p>(Literacy, Math)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide small groups in oral language, reading, math (1a, 1e, 2c) • Collect data on student levels (1f) • Teach the students the tasks in the center, providing visual models, center signs, flowcharts as needed (2e) • Have intentionally planned the center tasks to be integrated with the current unit of study/theme (1e, 2b) • Have set up hands-on, minds-on, meaningful activities and not worksheets (3c) • Provide visual reminds of strategies that have been taught and remind students to use them (2a) • Provide extension activities to support all students (3c) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be cognitively busy in meaningful activities (2b) • Monitor and support each other in completing literacy activity with limited support from the teacher (2c) • Explain what they are learning (3a) • Explain concepts to their peers and suggest strategies (3a) • Explore related materials if they complete a center task (3c) 		

Independent Work (Reading, Writing, Inquiry Projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate among the students to question, prompt, advance high-level thinking and promote metacognition (3b, 3d) • Ask children to explain their thinking (3b) • Conference individually with students to scaffold learning and collect evidence of their learning (3d) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on assigned tasks that are challenging yet achievable (1e) 		
Choice Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model and encourage problem solving, releasing responsibility to students to solve problems (3c) • Have frequent conversation with students, inquiring about their interests (2a) • Ask students to reflect on and evaluate their work (2b) • Provide multiple methods for the students to engage with a variety of materials (3a) • Provide a differentiation of materials that support the range of students abilities, interests, needs (2c) • Follow student- initiated activities and support learning through extension (3c) • Keep track of students' learning progress through note-taking, photos, videos, collecting work samples (3d) • Seize on opportunities to enhance learning, building on a spontaneous event or student interests (3e) • Ask open-ended questions to deepen thinking (2b) • Allow wait time for students to formulate and share their thinking (3a, 3d) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose which center they will work at, following their interests (1e, 2b) • Have reciprocal conversations with peers (2d) • Initiate inquiry into learning topics (1e, 3c) • Organize play with peers, negotiating roles and scenarios (2b) • Contribute evidence of learning for their portfolios with photos, dictation, drawing or writing work samples (3d) 		
Reflection Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give opportunities for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate student understanding (3c) • Share observations with the students about learning that s/he saw happening (3c) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and explain their completed or in progress work (3d) • Give summaries of their play scenarios (3c) 		