

# What is Developmentally Appropriate Practice?

- Developmentally appropriate practice requires meeting children where they are, which means that teachers must get to know children well and enable them to reach goals that are both challenging and achievable.
- All teaching practices should be appropriate to children's' ages and developmental stages. Educators must attune to them as unique individuals and be responsive to the social and cultural contexts in which they live.
- Developmentally appropriate practice does not mean making things easier for children. Rather, it means ensuring that goals and expectations are suited to their learning and development while also challenging enough to promote their progress and interest.
- Best practices are based on knowledge-not on assumptions-of how children learn and develop.

## Now what?

- **Knowing about child development and learning**

Knowing what is typical at each age and stage of early development is crucial. This knowledge, based on research, helps us decide which experiences are best for children's learning and development.

**Resource: TN-ELDS Revised, TN-ELDS, Head Start ELOF**

- **Knowing what is individually appropriate**

What we learn about specific children helps us teach and care for each child as an individual. By continually observing children's play and interactions with the physical environment and others, we learn about each child's interests, abilities, and developmental progress.

**Resources: Brigance, daily observations and interactions, e-Deca, anecdotal notes**

- **Knowing what is culturally important**

We must get to know children's' families and learn about the values, expectations, and factors that shape their lives at home and in their community. This background information helps us provide meaningful, relevant, and respectful learning experiences for each child and family.

**Resources: Families, Collaboration with Family Engagement Specialist**