

Part 1 Focus on the Caregiver

Chapter 1

Principles, Practice, and Curriculum

Summary

This chapter is about principles, practices, and curriculum and is based on 10 principles related to a philosophy of respect, which come from Magda Gerber and connect to the approach of Dr. Emmi Pikler. An explanation of each of the 10 principles takes up most of the chapter.

Relationships, Interactions, and the Three Rs

- Relationships are a cornerstone of infant-toddler care and education. They come from interactions, especially three-R interactions—that is, respectful, responsive, and reciprocal interactions.
- Caregiving routines are opportunities for three-R interactions as shown in the opening diapering scenario.

Ten Principles Based on a Philosophy of Respect

- Key words or phrases for the principles are: (1) involvement, (2) quality time, (3) communication, (4) total person, (5) respect, (6) honest feelings, (7) modeling behavior, (8) problems as opportunities, (9) security and trust, and (10) quality of development.

Curriculum and Developmentally Appropriate Practice

- The word *curriculum*, as it applies to infants and toddlers, can be defined as a course of study, a framework for practice, or a plan for learning that is all-inclusive and centers on connections and relationships.
- Curriculum in this book relates to the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) developmentally appropriate practice, which is based on three bases of knowledge: child development principles, individual differences, and cultural differences.
- The 10 principles of respectful care fit developmentally appropriate practice and can also be looked at in light of cultural differences.

Ten Principles Based on a Philosophy of Respect

1. Involve infants and toddlers in things that concern them. Don't work around them or distract them to get the job done faster.
2. Invest in quality time, when you are totally available to individual infants and toddlers. Don't settle for supervising groups without focusing (more than just briefly) on individual children.
3. Learn each child's unique ways of communicating (cries, words, movements, gestures, facial expressions, body positions) and teach yours. Don't underestimate children's ability to communicate even though their verbal language skills may be nonexistent or minimal.
4. Invest time and energy to build a total person (concentrate on the "whole child"). Don't focus on cognitive development alone or look at it as separate from total development.
5. Respect infants and toddlers as worthy people. Don't treat them as objects or cute little empty-headed people to be manipulated.
6. Be honest about your feelings around infants and toddlers. Don't pretend to feel something that you don't or not to feel something that you do.
7. Model the behavior you want to teach. Don't preach.
8. Recognize problems as learning opportunities, and let infants and toddlers try to solve their own. Don't rescue them, constantly make life easy for them, or try to protect them from all problems.
9. Build security by teaching trust. Don't teach distrust by being undependable or often inconsistent.
10. Be concerned about the quality of development in each stage. Don't rush infants and toddlers to reach developmental milestones.

Other In-Class Activities

Icebreaker

Choose one of the first eight activities from **A Quick Reference List of Learning Activities for Adults** (see **Chapter-by-Chapter Ideas and Suggestions: How to Use This Section**).

Discussion

After students have read Chapter 1 or you have lectured on it, divide students into small groups. Ask each group to choose one or two principles from the ten principles based on a philosophy of respect and discuss them. Have the groups come up with some examples of their chosen principles. Ask the groups to see if they can relate the principles to their own lives. Bring the class back together, and have students report the highlights of their discussion in their groups.

Brainstorming

Write the word “respect” on the board or on a chart paper. Ask students to suggest the words that come to their mind when they see, hear, or think about this word. Explain to students that there are no right or wrong answers; this is a free-association exercise designed to help students look deeper into the various meanings and connotations of the word. Write down all words that students suggest without judging or asking questions. After students stop suggesting words, ask them to get creative and think of some more words that can be associated with “respect.” Also, ask them to suggest metaphors that can be associated with this word. Then, tell them to imagine that they are making a TV commercial, and ask them to suggest images or symbols that go along with this word. When you have a sufficient number of words, ask students to write a poem or a paragraph about respect. (This exercise can be done in small groups or individually.) Have them share what they came up with, taking care that no one corrects or criticizes them.

Listening Exercise

Being receptive and responsive is a hard skill for some adults to learn. Have students read the feature titled “The Principles in Action” at the end of the chapter. This is a listening exercise designed to give them practice in being receptive and responsive. One person will talk, and the other will listen. This is a timed experience, so you will signal the beginning and the ending of the exercise. The speakers are to talk about whatever comes to their mind after reading the feature titled “The Principles in Action”—their reactions, feelings, experiences, ideas, and associations. The listeners have to listen to the speakers in a receptive, responsive way so that the speakers know the listeners are actually listening to them. This exercise does not involve an exchange or discussion of opinions. This is a listening exercise. Hence, the listener should not talk. There should be no questions, comments, or interruptions from the listeners when the speaker is talking and also when the speaker runs out of things to say. Divide the students into pairs, and tell each pair to quickly decide on who will talk first. Tell them that each partner will have 3 minutes to talk. When the 3-minute signal is made, the students should switch their roles. The listener should listen to the speaker in a receptive, responsive way, but he or she should not speak. After the exercise, ask students to share their experience with the class.

Discussion of the Principles in Action

The questions in the feature titled “The Principles in Action” can be used as a general class discussion or for discussion in small groups. They can also include the questions found in the feature titled “Appropriate Practice,” which relate to “The Principles in Action.” Remember that even though this text is based on a comprehensive and cohesive philosophy, it is important to honor diverse ideas. It may be a stretch to move from *right and wrong* to *different*, but this book challenges you and your students to do so.

Reflect Questions

This chapter's in-text **Reflect Questions** ask students to consider their own experiences, reactions, and ideas about the ten principles.

Caregiver's Companion Reading 1 Discussion

“*Caring for Infants with Respect: The RIE Approach*” by Magda Gerber (See the questions that follow the article.)

Caregiver's Companion Reading 21 and Discussion

“*Strategies for Supporting Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities in Inclusive Child Care*” by Donna Sullivan and Janet Gonzalez-Mena (With the help of this reading, you may bring up issues of inclusion into the beginning of the course that can set a theme for the rest of the textbook.)

Observation Activities

Video Observation 1: Observation and Reflection

Online Learning Center (OLC) Video Observation 1, *Baby Crying*, illustrates some of the principles discussed in Chapter 1.

Watch the clip from beginning to end. It is a very short segment. Then, think back to what you observed. Write down as much as you remember, giving as many details as possible. When you finish writing, watch the video again and add more details. Change what you wrote (if needed). Then, write one sentence at the bottom of your observation saying what you learned by doing it.

Ask students to discuss the questions that follow the video clip for Chapter 1. In addition to the video observation activity, consider the following ideas for observation assignments to use with Chapter 1:

- Chapter 1 contains many scenes of *synchronous interactions* between adults and children. Have students observe an infant program for a specified amount of time and ask them to observe the incidences of synchronous interactions. Have them write a running record observation of one such interaction.
- Principle 1 questions the idea that infants and toddlers have short attention spans by pointing out that when they are involved, they can be interested for a long time. Set up an

observation activity in which students time the attention spans of infants and/or toddlers to see if they can agree with the statement in the text.

- In Principle 2, two kinds of quality time are explained. Ask students to observe for examples of *wants-something quality time* and *wants-nothing quality time*.

Reflection Questions

1. What were your thoughts while reading this chapter? Did anything stand out, bother, or intrigue you?
2. Principle 6 addresses the idea that it is important to acknowledge and express one's feelings. This is based on a cultural idea that unexpressed feelings create tensions and can cause problems in one's relationship with an infant or a toddler. Not all cultures believe in the importance of expressing one's feelings toward infants and toddlers. What are your personal reactions to the idea of encouraging the expression of one's feelings toward infants and toddlers? Should you also express your feelings toward infants and toddlers?
3. Throughout this chapter, adults react to infants and toddlers without scolding or judging them. We don't see a single example of punishment. What is your reaction to this approach? Is it very different from the way you were brought up?
4. How do you feel about encouraging infants and toddlers to solve their own problems instead of having them expect an adult solve their problems for them?
5. In the section "The Right Amount of Quality Time," the text asserts that children and adults need to have private time. Privacy is a cultural issue, so the idea that people need space and time alone depends on one's cultural background. Do you agree with the text's assertion about privacy? Are you a person who needs some time and space to be alone? If yes, do you think your need is related to your culture or is it individual to you?