

## Guiding Principles

Written by admin  
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The Guiding Principles developed by the Early Childhood Care and Education Committee and adopted by the Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative Guam Team are as follows:

All children deserve equal opportunity and access to high quality early care and educational programs provided in a healthy and safe environment. These programs will support or contribute to a positive foundation for academic success and lifelong learning by:

- nurturing their overall developmental needs;
- respecting individual characteristics and cultures;
- strengthening partnerships between parents, teachers, providers, and administrators; and
  
- preparing them to enter school, ready to learn.

Along with these Guiding Principles, The Guam Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, Birth to 36 Months are based on the following principles supporting how young children learn. Early childhood programs and settings are encouraged to use these guidelines and principles to “understand how children grow and learn; know how to provide an environment and experiences that foster learning found in play activities; and understand the values and cultures of the communities and children they teach” (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

## Early Childhood Principles

1. Families are the primary teachers of their children and should be respected as partners in their early care and education. Teachers, caregivers, and administrators are encouraged to work with families to ensure that children are provided appropriate learning experiences and information needed to support their children’s learning.

2. All children will be respected as competent and unique individuals who differ in learning styles, home environments, and needs. Teachers, families, caregivers, and administrators will respect the well-being of all children, be responsive to individual children’s learning styles, encourage each child to develop their sense of self, and recognize how they represent their world in different ways.

3. Programs should be designed to support the development of the “whole child” by providing experiences that are fun, appropriate, and meaningful to children. Teachers, families, caregivers, and administrators will ensure they provide developmentally appropriate practices in their

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program. Known as DAP, developmentally appropriate practices means decisions made by caring adults that reflect the age, interests, needs, and strengths of each child, including awareness of their social and cultural environment. This collection of information guides planning and implementation of activities that are respectful and relevant to the child and family. Every child should have many opportunities for play which is a child's work, in well-designed indoor and outdoor environments. When children play, they are exploring things around them, using their small and large muscles, finding ways to solve problems, feeling good about themselves, developing friendships, and increasing their vocabulary.