

How to Develop a Philosophy of Teaching for

Early Childhood Education

Today, many educational institutions require a philosophy of teaching from early childhood education instructors. In addition to needing one when applying for a job, articulating their approach to education is an excellent idea for teachers for many other reasons.

First and foremost, a philosophy of teaching can help an educator clearly define what sort of teacher they want to be and this will help them move forward more easily in their career path. In essence, a philosophy of teaching is a one- or two-page document that expresses an educator's preferred teaching style, strengths and overall teaching orientation.

The document should be clearly written and should showcase the teacher's knowledge about the NAEYC requirements (National Association for the Education of Young Children). It should also present the underlying philosophy that will guide the teacher's curriculum choices and classroom management style.

6 steps to create a personal philosophy of early childhood education.

Creating and composing a personal philosophy of early childhood education document does not need to be daunting. In fact, it can be accomplished in these basic steps:

1. Define a preschool teacher's role

Take some time to clearly explain your ideas about a preschool teacher's role in the classroom. Include your beliefs about child-led activities vs. teacher-led activities, your philosophy on the teacher's role in playtime, and the presentation of brand new ideas vs. discoveries the child makes on their own. Consider also including a statement describing your sincere hopes and expectations for the children in your classroom.

2. Discuss the child's role as a learner

What is your philosophy regarding how children learn best? What types of activities and opportunities do you believe should be included in the classroom setting in order to facilitate the highest levels of learning for all students, regardless of preferred learning style? How might the child's role as the recipient of knowledge vary depending upon their preferred learning style? Be sure to include both structured learning activities and open-ended ideas, discussing what you believe is the ideal ratio of both types in the classroom.

3. Address special needs, different learning styles and diversity in the classroom

Discuss how specifically you will handle different personalities, learning styles, special needs and cultural diversity as you teach different children all in one classroom. Include a statement about how children with special learning needs will be welcomed in your classroom, and your specific strategies for meeting both those needs and the needs of the other students. Embracing diversity is pivotal to creating a warm and welcoming learning environment in today's classroom. When composing your philosophy of teaching document, you'll want to be sure you clearly define how you'll meet a variety of needs.

4. Define your curricular orientation

Map out your curricular orientation, including information about what has led you to form your specific beliefs. However, when you address this step, be careful to not criticize other approaches. Instead, consider connecting the information you provide about your curricular orientation with your previous statements about the role of the teacher in the early childhood education setting (in step 1).

5. Describe classroom and conflict management

In this section, describe how you approach any behavioral issues that may occur, and why you believe your chosen approach will work. Be very specific; for instance, will you use time-outs or withdrawal of playtime privileges?

6. Address family inclusion in the classroom

Finally, define how you plan to incorporate parents and other primary caregivers into your classroom. Outline your strategy for keeping parents involved and establishing and maintaining open lines of communication with family members.

Creating a personal philosophy of early childhood education should not be intimidating; in fact, it is an excellent opportunity to clarify your teaching philosophies and commit them to paper. Putting these philosophies in writing can serve as an impetus to clarify the type of educator you'd like to be, and this will benefit both your teaching career and your students.