

The Creative Curriculum

Five Fundamental Principles:

- (1) **Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.**
American educator, philosopher, psychologist, and theorist John Dewey explored education as a social process. He thought that children learn best when they interact with other people in a rich environment.
- (2) **Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.**
Erik Erikson, well-known psychologist, explored the cultural and social aspects of development that influence a person's actions and interactions throughout life. Erikson's psychosocial theory, called "Eight Ages of Man" begins at birth and continues through old age. During the first 6 years, children are challenged by the conflicts of *trust vs. mistrust* (infancy), *autonomy vs. shame and doubt* (ages 1-3), and *initiative vs. guilt* (ages 3-6).
- (3) **Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.**
Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist and developmental theorist, recognized the importance of play and its role in the development of logical thinking.
- (4) **The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.**
Both Dewey and Piaget explored how the physical environment, including materials, affect children's learning. Dewey proposed that children learn best in a stimulating environment that is designed according to the interests and experiences of the children in the classroom. Piaget theorized that children construct knowledge through action.
- (5) **Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.**
Urie Bronfenbrenner, developmental psychologist and theorist, stated that children develop within a variety of interconnected systems. Important learning settings for a preschool child are the home, neighborhood, and early education program.