

The Developmental Play Approach

As with the 1.0 system, the PreschoolFirst 2.0 assessment and curricular resource is based on a developmental approach to learning through everyday play planned in typical classroom learning centers. The PreschoolFirst assessment component consists of six developmental domains that organize 512 criterion-referenced behaviors in groups according to nine age ranges. These age ranges of behaviors are observed as developmentally appropriate during the first 5 ½ years of a child's life. PreschoolFirst guides the teacher to plan experiences for the everyday classroom according to the age range or developmental level of each child or group and to observe them at the right time.

Typical Early Learning Classroom with Learning Centers



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The PreschoolFirst system follows an interdisciplinary approach to child development and learning. Developmental behaviors from one *developmental* domain may actually fall under more than one academic discipline. Early childhood experts know that young children do not organize their play and learning according to “academic disciplines” or subject domains; but rather they connect new experiences and information to

Behaviors observed in PreschoolFirst are categorized into developmental domains:

- Cognitive,
- Communication,
- Fine Motor,
- Gross Motor,
- Sensorimotor (infants), and
- Social Emotional.

understandings they already know, and build upon actions and abilities they can already do. All content areas in PreschoolFirst from early literacy, mathematics, social studies, science and the creative arts disciplines are integrated into a developmental framework of appropriate learning activities through themes or topics. This scaffolds the development of new abilities upon the strengths of their existing accomplishments and promotes children's learning, and helps build a foundation of knowledge and learning strategies that will serve children well in years to come.