Foundations and Best Practices in Early Childhood Education
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HISTORY, THEORIES, AND APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Fourth Edition

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Preface

The field of early care and education has been growing and evolving for centuries. There is much to be learned from our past as we create a vision for our future. Even more valuable perspectives can be explored by examining the unique approaches and beliefs that shape current practices around the world. This text is an invitation to embark on a broad exploration of the scope, roles, and practices of working with and for children and families.

This text is written for beginning educators as well as for those with experience teaching young children who are furthering their education and professional development. For the beginning educator, this is an invitation to consider your place in this dynamic field by tracing its history and current trends. For the more experienced educator, this text can provide more in-depth explorations of specific methods and approaches to guide the ongoing process of professionalizing your practice. The overarching goal of this text is for professionals to make connections between beliefs and philosophies and their own practice. To do this, I have included many stories and extended vignettes, which come from a variety of classrooms and highlight how teachers and programs are integrating guiding principles and beliefs into applied practice. It is my hope that you will use this text to begin or continue a reflective journey on the evolving path of defining and reshaping practice with children and families. Go forth and find your voice—the voice you will raise in advocacy on behalf of all children and families.

New to This Edition

It has been well over a decade since the publication of the first edition of this text. Over these years and multiple revisions, Foundations and Best Practices in Early Childhood has become more and more applied, with lively and vivid descriptions of programs and practices threaded throughout each chapter. This fourth edition reflects the most recent changes in early care and education practice, illustrated by observation descriptions from programs around the United States in different community settings. New updates reflect legislative and policy changes as well as the latest research on effective practice. Throughout the text, content has been expanded to include even more emphasis on inclusive practices and family diversity. You will find important revisions and updates in the following areas:

- Interactive video and quiz elements reinforce readers’ comprehension and retention of chapter content.
- Description of digital portfolios.
- The Pearson eText contains embedded video links to illustrate key concepts and practices.
- More graphic features include charts and graphs to present content in reader-friendly formats.
• Chapter 1: Expanded developmental snapshots of young children with more emphasis on infants and toddlers; new sections on social emotional learning and self-regulation.
• Chapter 2: Stronger connections to how historical roots influence today’s practice; updated to include Race to the Top initiatives.
• Chapter 3: New content on Quality Rating and Improvement Systems
• Chapter 4: All new learning theories added to broaden readers’ perspectives, including attachment, social learning, and neuroscience education theories and research.
• Chapter 5: Updated content throughout chapter.
• Chapters 6–11: Content reorganized, streamlined, and updated.
• Chapter 8: Enhanced content on inclusion.
• Chapter 10: New section on play and Montessori Education.
• Chapter 12: New sections on preschool expulsion and the opportunity (achievement) gap.

**Features of the Text**

The Classroom View cases from the field included in most chapters provide a snapshot of diverse early care and education settings and illustrate the key concepts presented in the chapters. I invite you also to reflect on your own observations in light of these stories, comparing your experiences with those included here.

The In Your Own Words boxed features encourage you to reflect on specific aspects of your own beliefs and practice. We also pause frequently along this journey to think about specific suggested applications, which are highlighted in the Putting It Into Practice boxed features. These highly applied elements are essential features to help make the theory to practice leap that is so important for high quality practices.

Several themes run like threads throughout the text: teachers’ roles, views of children, current practices in today’s programs, inclusion, and diversity. These are key aspects of all practice that you, too, must integrate into your thinking and teaching. The reflection prompts, questions at the end of each chapter, and application activities are all designed to facilitate the development of your own beliefs and practices about these key themes. The new video segments, interactive quizzes, and expanded interactive video exercises provide readers with more opportunities to apply knowledge and deepen comprehension. The appendixes contain tools that can be used in this process, including samples of graphic organizers to facilitate content understanding and a comprehensive professional portfolio plan.

**Guiding Concepts**

Several concepts that guide this text are used as a lens through which we will view the field. First, this text takes a child-centered approach to early childhood education. Childhood is a unique and valued period of life, and children are capable, competent, and active participants in their growth and learning.
Another guiding concept is the belief, flowing from constructivist learning theory, that children are busily and actively building knowledge from their earliest moments through meaningful experiences and relationships with people and environments. Children continue this lively inner process even when they are quiet. Their learning, thinking, and feeling are expressed in myriad “languages,” or ways of communicating. Teachers must be receptive and respectful of them all, giving children opportunities to explore and express themselves in many ways.

I strongly believe that teaching is a personal as well as a professional endeavor. Adults and children form social bonds and relationships that are at the heart of learning.

Above all else, I believe that children deserve to be respected and loved by the adults in their lives who joyfully and intentionally engage in this challenging, complex, and rewarding field. It is with this spirit of love and respect that I present this text to you and wish you a challenging, surprising, rewarding journey.

**Professional Preparation: Portfolio and Focus on Core Content**

In addition to the overarching themes, two aspects to help you in your professional preparation are woven throughout this book. In each chapter, you will be guided to activities that help shape your professional portfolio. Your portfolio is used to present a picture of who you are as a developing teacher and as a teacher education student. The other element woven throughout the text is an emphasis on core content aligning with teacher preparation exams, such as the Praxis™ Early Childhood tests. The foundations, key theories, and examples of best practices presented here represent a major part of the content of such exams.

**Ancillaries Accompanying This Text**

All ancillaries are available online. To download and print ancillary files, go to www.pearsonhighered.com and then click on Educators.

**Instructor Resource Manual**  This manual contains a glossary handout, chapter overviews, additional Web resources, and additional application activities for in-class and out-of-class which are designed to enhance students’ understanding of chapter concepts and build students’ professional portfolios.

**Online Test Bank**  The Test Bank includes a variety of test items, including multiple choice and essay items, organized by chapter and ready for use.

**TestGen**  is a powerful test generator available exclusively from Pearson. You install TestGen on your personal computer (Windows or Macintosh) and create your own tests for classroom testing and for other specialized delivery options, such as over a local area network or on the web. It contains the same test items as the Online Test Bank. Using TestGen, assessments can be created for both print or testing online. The tests can be downloaded in the following formats:

- TestGen Testbank file—PC
- TestGen Testbank file—MAC
Online PowerPoint® Slides  Colorful PowerPoint slides prompt student engagement with reflective questions, highlight key concepts and strategies in each chapter.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to offer my heartfelt appreciation to all my students who are emerging or practicing teachers. It is for you that I undertook this project. I hope that the inspiration and collegiality we share in our classes continue to fuel your work as they do mine. It continues to be an honor to travel this road together. I wish you all a successful and nourishing journey.

I would like to thank Luci Coke for all her assistance in gathering the tremendous research that went into the first edition of this book and Julie Peters for her decade of insightful support and valuable feedback. This project is stronger for your caring involvement.

I am particularly grateful to all the dozens of classrooms, homes, centers, and schools that graciously allowed me to visit, observe, ask questions, dialogue, and joyfully engage in this process of gathering and sharing our professional stories. It is because of you all that this work, and the goals of continually improving practice for young children everywhere, are made possible.

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Finally, I lovingly dedicate this project to Greisan, the motivation behind it all.
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