

# *Early Childhood Education Today*



## CHAPTER 6

# Early Childhood Programs

APPLYING THEORIES TO PRACTICE

*If education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it. . . . For what is the use of transmitting knowledge if the individual's total development lags behind? And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being.*

MARIA MONTESSORI

Parents want their children to attend high-quality programs that will provide them with a good start in life. They want to know that their children are being well cared for and educated. Parents want their children to get along with others, be happy, and learn. How to best meet these legitimate parental expectations is one of the ongoing challenges of early childhood professionals.<sup>1</sup>

## THE GROWING DEMAND FOR QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation's largest organization of early childhood educators, accredits 10,845 early childhood programs serving approximately 915,000 children.<sup>2</sup> These programs are only a fraction of the total number of early childhood programs in the United States. Think for a minute about what goes on in these and other programs from day to day. For some children teachers and staff implement well-thought-out and articulated programs that provide for children's growth and development across all the developmental domains—cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, and physical. In other programs, children are not so fortunate. Their days are filled with aimless activities that fail to meet their academic and developmental needs.

With the national spotlight on the importance of the early years, the public is demanding more from early childhood professionals and their programs. On the one hand, the public is willing to invest more heavily in early childhood programs, but on the other hand, it is demanding that the early childhood profession and individual programs respond by providing meaningful programs.<sup>3</sup> The public demands these things from early childhood professionals:

- Programs that will help ensure children's early academic and school success.  
The public believes that too many children are being left out and left behind.<sup>4</sup>
- The inclusion of early literacy and reading readiness activities in programs and curricula that will enable children to read on grade level in grades one, two, and three.  
Literacy is the key to much of school and life success, and school success begins in preschool and before.<sup>5</sup>
- Environments that will help children develop the social and behavioral skills necessary to help them lead civilized and nonviolent lives.

In the wake of daily news headlines about shootings and assaults by younger and younger children, the public wants early childhood programs to assume an ever-growing responsibility for helping get children off to a non-violent start in life.<sup>6</sup>

## Focus Questions

Why is there a need for high-quality early childhood education programs?

What are the basic features of high-quality early childhood education programs?

What are the unique characteristics and strengths of early childhood education programs?

How can you apply features of early childhood programs to your professional practice?

### Companion Website



To check your understanding of this chapter, go to the Companion Website at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then answer Multiple Choice and Essay Questions and receive feedback.

**Model early childhood program** An exemplary approach to early childhood education that serves as a guide to best practices.

As a result of these public demands, there is a growing and critical need for programs that teachers and others can adopt and use. In this chapter we examine and discuss some of the more notable programs for use in early childhood settings. As you read about and reflect on each of these, think about their strengths and weaknesses and the ways each tries to best meet the needs of children and families. Pause for a minute and review Table 6.1, which outlines the **model early childhood programs** discussed in this chapter.

Let's now look at four highly regarded and widely adopted model programs: Montessori, High/Scope, Reggio Emilia, and Waldorf. There is a good probability that you will be associated in some way as a teacher, parent, or advisory board member with one of these programs. In any event, you will want to be informed about their main features and operating principles.

## PRINCIPLES OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD

Review again the introductory material on Maria Montessori in chapter 4. The Montessori method has been and is very popular around the world with early childhood professionals and parents. The Montessori approach is designed to support the natural development of children in a well-prepared environment.

Five basic principles fairly and accurately represent how Montessori educators implement the Montessori method in many kinds of programs across the United States. Figure 6.1 illustrates these five basic principles of the **Montessori method**.

**Montessori method** A system of early childhood education founded on the ideas and practices of Maria Montessori.

### FIGURE 6.1 Basic Montessori Principles

These basic principles are the foundation of the Montessori method. Taken as a whole, they constitute a powerful model for helping all children learn to their fullest.

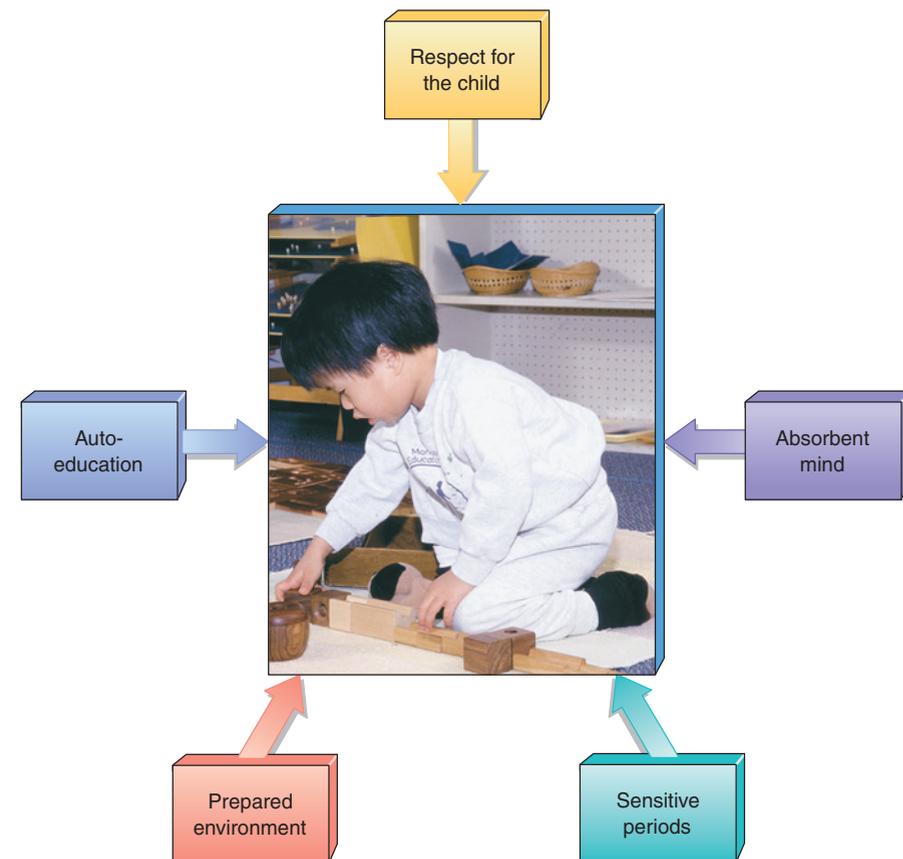


TABLE 6.1 Comparing Models of Early Childhood Education

Program	Main Features	Teacher's Role
 <p><b>Montessori</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theoretical basis is the philosophy and beliefs of Maria Montessori.</li> <li>Prepared environment supports, invites, and enables learning.</li> <li>Children educate themselves—self-directed learning.</li> <li>Sensory materials invite and promote learning.</li> <li>Set curriculum regarding what children should learn—Montessorians try to stay as close to Montessori's ideas as possible.</li> <li>Children are grouped in multiage environments.</li> <li>Children learn by manipulating materials and working with others.</li> <li>Learning takes place through the senses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follows the child's interests and needs</li> <li>Prepares an environment that is educationally interesting and safe*</li> <li>Directs unobtrusively as children individually or in small groups engage in self-directed activity*</li> <li>Observes, analyzes, and provides materials and activities appropriate for the child's sensitive periods of learning*</li> <li>Maintains regular communications with the parent</li> </ul>
 <p><b>High/Scope</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theory is based on Piaget, constructivism, Dewey, and Vygotsky.</li> <li>Plan-do-review is the teaching-learning cycle.</li> <li>Emergent curriculum is one not planned in advance.</li> <li>Children help determine curriculum.</li> <li>Key experiences guide the curriculum in promoting children's active learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans activities based on children's interests</li> <li>Facilitates learning through encouragement*</li> <li>Engages in positive adult-child interaction strategies*</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Reggio Emilia</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theory is based on Piaget, constructivism, Vygotsky, and Dewey.</li> <li>Emergent curriculum is one not planned in advance.</li> <li>Curriculum is based on children's interests and experiences.</li> <li>Curriculum is project oriented.</li> <li>Hundred languages of children—symbolic representation of work and learning.</li> <li>Learning is active.</li> <li>Atelierista—a special teacher is trained in the arts.</li> <li>Atelier—an art/design studio is used by children and teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works collaboratively with other teachers</li> <li>Organizes environments rich in possibilities and provocations*</li> <li>Acts as recorder for the children, helping them trace and revisit their words and actions*</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Waldorf</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theoretical basis is the philosophy and beliefs of Rudolf Steiner.</li> <li>The whole child—head, heart and hands—is educated.</li> <li>The arts are integrated into all curriculum areas.</li> <li>Study of myths, lores, and fairy tales promotes the imagination and multiculturalism.</li> <li>Main-lesson teacher stays with the same class from childhood to adolescence.</li> <li>Learning is by doing—making and doing.</li> <li>Learning is noncompetitive.</li> <li>The developmental phases of each child are followed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acts as a role model exhibiting the values of the Waldorf school</li> <li>Provides an intimate classroom atmosphere full of themes about caring for the community and for the natural and living world*</li> <li>Encourages children's natural sense of wonder, belief in goodness, and love of beauty*</li> <li>Creates a love of learning in each child</li> </ul>

\*Information from C. Edwards, "Three Approaches from Europe: Waldorf, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia," *Early Childhood Research & Practice* 4, no.1 (2002). Available online at <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v4n1/edwards.html>.

## RESPECT FOR THE CHILD

Respect for the child is the cornerstone on which all other Montessori principles rest. As Montessori said:

As a rule, however, we do not respect children. We try to force them to follow us without regard to their special needs. We are overbearing with them, and above all, rude; and then we expect them to be submissive and well-behaved, knowing all the time how strong is their instinct of imitation and how touching their faith in and admiration of us. They will imitate us in any case. Let us treat them, therefore, with all the kindness which we would wish to help to develop in them.<sup>7</sup>

Teachers show respect for children when they help them do things and learn for themselves. When children have choices, they are able to develop the skills and abilities necessary for effective learning autonomy, and positive self-esteem. (The theme of respect for children resurfaces in our discussion of guiding behavior in chapter 14.)

## THE ABSORBENT MIND

Montessori believed that children educate themselves: “It may be said that we acquire knowledge by using our minds; but the child absorbs knowledge directly into his psychic life. Simply by continuing to live, the child learns to speak his native tongue.”<sup>8</sup> This is the concept of the **absorbent mind**.

Montessori wanted us to understand that children can’t help learning. Simply by living, children learn from their environment. Children are born to learn, and they are remarkable learning systems. Children learn because they are thinking beings. But what they learn depends greatly on their teachers, experiences, and environments.

Early childhood teachers are reemphasizing the idea that children are born learning and with constant readiness and ability to learn. We will discuss these concepts further in chapter 9.

## SENSITIVE PERIODS

Montessori believed there are **sensitive periods** when children are more susceptible to certain behaviors and can learn specific skills more easily:

A sensitive period refers to a special sensibility which a creature acquires in its infantile state, while it is still in a process of evolution. It is a transient disposition and limited to the acquisition of a particular trait. Once this trait or characteristic has been acquired, the special sensibility disappears. . . .<sup>9</sup>

Although all children experience the same sensitive periods (e.g., a sensitive period for writing), the sequence and timing vary for each child. One role of the teacher is to use observation to detect times of sensitivity and provide the setting for optimum fulfillment. Refer to chapter 3 to review guidelines for observing children.

## THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

Montessori believed that children learn best in a **prepared environment**, a place in which children can *do things for themselves*. The prepared environment makes learning materials and experiences available to children in an orderly format. Classrooms Montessori described are really what educators advocate when they talk about child-centered education and active learning. Freedom is the essential characteristic of the prepared environment. Since children within the environment are free to explore materials of their own choosing, they absorb what they find there.

**Absorbent mind** The idea that the minds of young children are receptive to and capable of learning. The child learns unconsciously by taking in information from the environment.

**Sensitive period** A relatively brief time during which learning is most likely to occur. Also called a critical period.



In the Montessori segment of the DVD, observe the prepared environment, the way it is arranged, and the way it helps children take control of their own learning.

**Prepared environment** A classroom or other space that is arranged and organized to support learning in general and/or special knowledge and skills.

## AUTOEDUCATION

Montessori named the concept that children are capable of educating themselves **autoeducation** (also known as self-education). Children who are actively involved in a prepared environment and who exercise freedom of choice literally educate themselves. Montessori teachers prepare classrooms so that children educate themselves.

## THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Montessori believed that “it is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may be always ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience.”<sup>10</sup>

The Montessori teacher demonstrates key behaviors to implement this child-centered approach:

- *Make children the center of learning.* As Montessori said, “The teacher’s task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.”<sup>11</sup>
- *Encourage children to learn* by providing freedom for them in the prepared environment.
- *Observe children* so as to prepare the best possible environment, recognizing sensitive periods and diverting inappropriate behavior to meaningful tasks.
- *Prepare the learning environment* by ensuring that learning materials are provided in an orderly format and that the materials provide for appropriate experiences for all the children.
- *Respect each child* and model ongoing respect for all children and their work.
- *Introduce learning materials*, demonstrate learning materials, and support children’s learning. The teacher introduces learning materials after observing each child.

## THE MONTESSORI METHOD IN ACTION

In a prepared environment, materials and activities provide for three basic areas of child involvement:

1. Practical life or motor education
2. Sensory materials for training the senses
3. Academic materials for teaching writing, reading, and mathematics

All these activities are taught according to a prescribed procedure.

## PRACTICAL LIFE

The prepared environment supports basic, **practical life** activities, such as walking from place to place in an orderly manner, carrying objects such as trays and chairs, greeting a visitor, and learning self-care skills. For example, *dressing frames* are designed to perfect the motor skills involved in buttoning, zipping, lacing, buckling, and tying. The philosophy for activities such as these is to make children independent and develop concentration.



▲ The Montessori prepared environment makes materials and experiences available for children to explore for themselves. Why is it important to prepare such an organized environment?

▲ **Autoeducation** The idea that children teach themselves through appropriate materials and activities.



Companion Website  
For more information about the Montessori curriculum model, go to the [Companion Website](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison) at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Linking to Learning module.

▲ **Practical life** Montessori activities that teach skills related to everyday living.

Practical life activities are taught through four different types of exercise:

1. *Care of the person*—activities such as using dressing frames, polishing shoes, and washing hands
2. *Care of the environment*—for example, dusting, polishing a table, and raking leaves
3. *Social relations*—lessons in grace and courtesy
4. *Analysis and control of movement*—locomotor activities such as walking and balancing

### SENSORY MATERIALS

The **sensory materials** described in Figure 6.2 are among those found in a typical Montessori classroom. Materials for training and developing the senses have these characteristics:

- *Control of error.* Materials are designed so that children can see whether they make a mistake; for example, a child who does not build the blocks of the pink tower in their proper order does not achieve a tower effect.
- *Isolation of a single quality.* Materials are designed so that other variables are held constant except for the isolated quality or qualities. Therefore, all blocks of the pink tower are pink because size, not color, is the isolated quality.
- *Active involvement.* Materials encourage active involvement rather than the more passive process of looking.
- *Attractiveness.* Materials are attractive, with colors and proportions that appeal to children.

Sensory materials have several purposes:

- To train children's senses to focus on an obvious, particular quality. For example, with the red rods, the quality is length; with the pink tower cubes, size; and with the bells, musical pitch.
- To help sharpen children's powers of observation and visual discrimination as readiness for learning to read.
- To increase children's ability to think, a process that depends on the ability to distinguish, classify, and organize.
- To prepare children for the occurrence of the sensitive periods for writing and reading. In this sense, all activities are preliminary steps in the writing-reading process.

### ACADEMIC MATERIALS

The third area of Montessori materials is more academic. Exercises are presented in a sequence that encourages writing before reading. Reading is therefore an outgrowth of writing. Both processes, however, are introduced so gradually that children are never aware they are learning to write and read until one day they realize they are writing and reading. Describing this phenomenon, Montessori said that children "burst spontaneously" into writing and reading. She anticipated contemporary practices by integrating writing and reading and maintaining that writing lays the foundation for learning to read.

Montessori believed that many children were ready for writing at four years of age. Consequently, children who enter a Montessori system at age three have done most of the

#### Sensory materials

Montessori learning materials designed to promote learning through the senses and to train the senses for learning.



In the Montessori segment of the DVD, identify the five senses Montessori believed to be important in learning, and observe how sensory learning materials promote learning through the senses.



▲ Sensory materials such as these help children learn about size, length, and measuring. Children enjoy using hands-on materials to learn about real-life problems.

Material	Illustration	Descriptions and Learning Purposes
Pink tower		Ten wooden cubes of the same shape and texture, all pink, the largest of which is ten centimeters. Each succeeding block is one centimeter smaller. Children build a tower beginning with the largest block. (Visual discrimination of dimension)
Brown stairs		Ten wooden blocks, all brown, differing in height and width. Children arrange the blocks next to each other from thickest to thinnest so the blocks resemble a staircase. (Visual discrimination of width and height)
Red rods		Ten rod-shaped pieces of wood, all red, of identical thickness but differing in length from ten centimeters to one meter. The child arranges the rods next to each other from largest to smallest. (Visual discrimination of length)
Cylinder blocks		Four individual wooden blocks that have holes of various sizes and matching cylinders; one block deals with height, one with diameter, and two with the relationship of both variables. Children remove the cylinders in random order, then match each cylinder to the correct hole. (Visual discrimination of size)
Smelling jars		Two identical sets of white opaque glass jars with removable tops through which the child cannot see but through which odors can pass. The teacher places various substances, such as herbs, in the jars, and the child matches the jars according to the smells. (Olfactory discrimination)
Baric tablets		Sets of rectangular pieces of wood that vary according to weight. There are three sets—light, medium, and heavy—which children match according to the weight of the tablets. (Discrimination of weight)
Color tablets		Two identical sets of small rectangular pieces of wood used for matching color or shading. (Discrimination of color and education of the chromatic sense)
Cloth swatches		Two identical swatches of cloth. Children identify them according to touch, first without a blindfold but later using a blindfold. (Sense of touch)
Tonal bells		Two sets of eight bells, alike in shape and size but different in color; one set is white, the other brown. The child matches the bells by tone. (Sound and pitch)
Sound boxes		Two identical sets of cylinders filled with various materials, such as salt and rice. Children match the cylinders according to the sound the fillings make. (Auditory discrimination)
Temperature jugs or thermic bottles		Small metal jugs filled with water of varying temperatures. Children match jugs of the same temperature. (Thermic sense and ability to distinguish between temperatures)

FIGURE 6.2 Montessori Sensory Materials

sensory exercises by the time they are four. It is not uncommon to see four- and five-year-olds in a Montessori classroom writing and reading. Figure 6.3 shows an example of a child's writing.

Following are examples of Montessori materials that promote writing and reading:

- *Ten geometric forms and colored pencils.* These introduce children to the coordination necessary for writing. After selecting a geometric inset, children trace it on paper and fill in the outline with a colored pencil of their choosing.

**FIGURE 6.3** Writing Sample by Montessori Student Ella Rivas-Chacon



- *Sandpaper letters.* Each letter of the alphabet is outlined in sandpaper on a card, with vowels in blue and consonants in red. Children see the shape, feel the shape, and hear the sound of the letter, which the teacher repeats when introducing it.
- *Movable alphabet with individual letters.* Children learn to put together familiar words.
- *Command cards.* These are a set of red cards with a single action word printed on each card. Children read the word on the card and do what the word tells them to do (e.g., run, jump).

### MONTESSORI AND CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES

The Montessori approach supports many methods used in contemporary early childhood programs:

- *Integrated curriculum.* Montessori involves children in actively manipulating concrete materials across the curriculum—writing, reading, science, math, geography, and the arts.
- *Active learning.* In Montessori classrooms, children are actively involved in their own learning. Manipulative materials provide for active and concrete learning.

- *Individualized instruction.* Montessori individualizes learning through children's interactions with the materials as they proceed at their own rates of mastery. Montessori materials are age appropriate for a wide age range of children.
- *Independence.* The Montessori environment emphasizes respect for children and promotes success, both of which encourage children to be independent.
- *Appropriate assessment.* In a Montessori classroom, observation is the primary means of assessing children's progress, achievement, and behavior. Well-trained Montessori teachers are skilled observers of children and are adept at translating their observation into appropriate ways of guiding, directing, facilitating, and supporting children's active learning.
- *Developmentally appropriate practice.* The concepts and process of developmentally appropriate curricula and practice (see chapters 9 through 12) are foundational in the Montessori method.

You can gain a good understanding of the ebb and flow of life in a Montessori classroom by reading and reflecting on the Program in Action, which describes a day at Children's House.



### PROVIDING FOR DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY

Montessori education is ideally suited to meet the needs of children from diverse backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those with other special needs such as giftedness. Montessori believed that all children are intrinsically motivated to learn and that they absorb knowledge when they are provided appropriate environments at appropriate times of development. Thus, Montessorians believe in providing for individual differences in enriching environments.

The Circle of Inclusion Project at the University of Kansas identifies ten specific aspects of Montessori education that have direct applicability to the education of children with disabilities:

- *The use of mixed-age groups.* The mixed-age groupings found within a Montessori classroom are conducive to a successful inclusion experience. Mixed-age groups necessitate a wide range of materials within each classroom to meet the individual needs of children, rather than the average need of the group.
- *Individualization within the context of a supportive classroom community.* The individualized curriculum in Montessori classrooms is compatible with the individualization required for children with disabilities. Work in a Montessori classroom is introduced to children according to individual readiness rather than chronological age.
- *An emphasis on functionality within the Montessori environment.* Real objects are used rather than toy replications whenever possible (e.g., children cut bread with a real knife, sweep up crumbs on the floor with a broom, and dry wet tables with cloths). In a Montessori classroom, the primary goal is to prepare children for life; special education also focuses on the development of functional skills.
- *The development of independence and the ability to make choices.* Montessori classrooms help all children make choices and become independent learners in many ways; for example, children may choose any material for which they have had a lesson given by the teacher. This development of independence is especially appropriate for children with disabilities.

▲ This child is learning visual relationships and improving her visual motor skills while working on a land-water geographic activity. Montessori believed that it is important for children to learn geographical concepts as a basis for learning about their world.

**Companion Website**  
To complete a Program in Action activity related to the Montessori method, go to the **Companion Website** at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Program in Action module.

## CHILDREN'S HOUSE DAILY SCHEDULE

This sample schedule is typical of a Montessori program. It is structured to allow for activities in all three basic areas of involvement—life, sensory materials, and academic

materials—and includes a rest period for the youngest children.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES	BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN
<b>8:00–10:45</b> <b>Work Period</b> Children spend this uninterrupted time working on individual or small-group activities at a table or on a rug on the floor. Many activities require a lesson from the teacher. Others, such as puzzles, can be used without a lesson. Children who choose an activity that is too difficult for them are offered something that better matches their abilities.	These activities allow children to improve their attention span and concentration skills, small-motor control, eye-hand coordination, attention to detail, perseverance, and the joy of learning. Responsibility for one's own learning is developed as the children make their own choices.
<b>10:45–11:15</b> <b>Circle Time</b> This group activity includes calling the roll, a peace ceremony, grace and courtesy lessons, stories, songs, games, or lessons on something new in the classroom. Children help set the tables for lunch, feed the animals, water the plants, and perform other chores.	Whole-group lessons are an important time for children to learn how to take turns, participate appropriately in a larger society, share feelings and ideas, enjoy each other's company in songs and games, and learn respect for others.
<b>11:15–11:45</b> <b>Outside Play</b> Climbing on the play apparatus, sand play, and gardening are a few of the activities available on the playground.	Large-motor control, participation in group games, and learning about the wonders of nature take place as the children play outside.

<b>11:45–12:25</b> <b>Lunchtime</b>	The children wash their hands, wait until all are seated before beginning, concentrate on manners and pleasant conversations at the table, take a taste of everything, pack up leftovers, throw away trash, and remain seated until everyone is finished and excused. After lunch, children help clean the tables and sweep the floor.	Respectful behavior at mealtime is learned through modeling and direction from the teacher. Discussions can include manners, healthy nutrition, and family customs. Cooperation and teamwork are fostered as children help each other clean up and transition to the next activity.
<b>12:25–12:50</b> <b>Outside Play</b>	Climbing on the play apparatus, sand play, and gardening are again available on the playground.	See earlier outside play.
<b>12:50–3:00</b> <b>Age-Appropriate Activities</b>	Nappers—Children under the age of 4½ sleep or rest in a small-group setting.  Pre-kindergarten—Children between 4½ and 5 rest quietly for 30 minutes and then join the kindergarten group.  Kindergarten—Children who are 5 years old by September 30 and are ready for the kindergarten experience continue to work on the lessons that were begun in the morning; they also have more extensive lessons in geography, science, art appreciation, writing, and music.	Rest rejuvenates these young children for participation in the remainder of the day.  Working alongside kindergartners encourages pre-kindergarten children to emulate their classmates in academic as well as social skills.  Kindergarten children benefit from being part of a small group and working to their full potential in any area of their choosing. The joy of learning comes to life as they concentrate on works of intrinsic interest to them.
<b>3:00–3:45</b> <b>Outside Play</b>	Climbing on the play apparatus, sand play, and gardening are again available on the playground.	See earlier outside play.
<b>3:45–4:00</b> <b>Group Snack</b>	Children share a snack before starting the afternoon activities.	A snack provides another opportunity to encourage manners and healthy eating.
<b>4:00–5:30</b> <b>After-School Fun</b>	Activities at this time can include games, art, drama, music, movement, cooking, or an educational video.	Cooperation, teamwork, and creative expression are fostered as children build self-esteem.
<b>5:30</b> <b>End of Day</b>	All children should be picked up by this time.	Pick-up time offers the children an opportunity to say good-bye to the teacher and each other. It also gives the teacher a chance to speak briefly with parents.

Contributed by Keturah Collins, owner and director, Children's House Montessori School, Reston, Virginia, [www.childrenhouse-montessori.com](http://www.childrenhouse-montessori.com).

- *The development of organized work patterns in children.* One objective of the practical life area and the beginning point for every young child is the development of organized work habits. Children with disabilities who need to learn to be organized in their work habits and their use of time benefit from this emphasis.
- *The classic Montessori demonstration.* Demonstrations themselves have value for learners who experience disabilities. A demonstration uses a minimum of language selected specifically for its relevance to the activity and emphasizes an orderly progression from the beginning to the end of the task. Observe several demonstrations by teachers in the enclosed DVD.

- *An emphasis on repetition.* Children with special needs typically require lots of practice and may make progress in small increments.
- *Materials with a built-in control of error.* Materials that have a built-in control of error benefit all children. Because errors are obvious, children notice and correct them without the help of a teacher.
- *Academic materials that provide a concrete representation of the abstract.* Montessori classrooms offer a wide range of concrete materials that children can learn from as a regular part of the curriculum. For children with disabilities, the use of concrete materials is critical to promote real learning.

- *Sensory materials that develop and organize incoming sensory perceptions.* Sensory materials can develop and refine each sense in isolation. A child who cannot see will benefit enormously from materials that train and refine the senses of touch, hearing, and smell, for example.<sup>12</sup>

### FURTHER THOUGHTS

In many respects, Maria Montessori was a person for all generations who contributed greatly to early childhood programs and practices. Many of her ideas—such as preparing the environment, providing child-size furniture, promoting active learning and independence, and using multiage grouping—have been fully incorporated into early childhood classrooms. As a result, it is easy to take her contributions, like Froebel’s (see chapter 4), for granted. We do many things in a Montessorian way without thinking too much about it.

What is important is that early childhood professionals adopt the best of Montessori for children of the twenty-first century. As with any practice, professionals must adopt approaches to fit the children they are teaching while remaining true to what is best in that approach. Respect for children is never out of date and should be accorded to all children regardless of culture, gender, or socioeconomic background.

### HIGH/SCOPE: A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is a nonprofit organization that sponsors and supports the **High/Scope** educational approach. The program is based on Piaget’s intellectual development theory, discussed in chapter 5. High/Scope provides broad, realistic educational experiences geared to children’s current stages of development, to promote the constructive processes of learning necessary to broaden emerging intellectual and social skills.<sup>13</sup> Read the accompanying Program in Action, “High/Scope in Practice,” on pages 16–17 to understand how High/Scope works in the classroom.

High/Scope is based on three fundamental principles:

- Active participation of children in choosing, organizing, and evaluating learning activities, which are undertaken with careful teacher observation and guidance in a learning environment replete with a rich variety of materials located in various classroom learning centers
- Regular daily planning by the teaching staff in accord with a developmentally based curriculum model and careful child observations
- Developmentally sequenced goals and materials for children based on the High/Scope “key experiences”<sup>14</sup>

### BASIC PRINCIPLES AND GOALS OF THE HIGH/SCOPE APPROACH

The High/Scope program strives to

develop in children a broad range of skills, including the problem solving, interpersonal, and communication skills that are essential for successful living in a rapidly changing society. The curriculum encourages student initiative by providing children with materials, equipment, and time to pursue activities they choose. At the same time, it provides teachers with a framework for guiding children’s independent activities toward sequenced learning goals.

The teacher plays a key role in instructional activities by selecting appropriate, developmentally sequenced material and by encouraging children to adopt an active problem-solving approach to learning. . . . This teacher-student interaction—teachers helping

students achieve developmentally sequenced goals while also encouraging them to set many of their own goals—uniquely distinguishes the High/Scope Curriculum from direct-instruction and child-centered curricula.<sup>15</sup>

The High/Scope approach influences the arrangement of the classroom, the manner in which teachers interact with children, and the methods employed to assess children. The High/Scope curriculum consists of the five interrelated components shown in Figure 6.4. This figure shows how active learning forms the hub of the “wheel of learning” and is supported by the key elements of the curriculum.

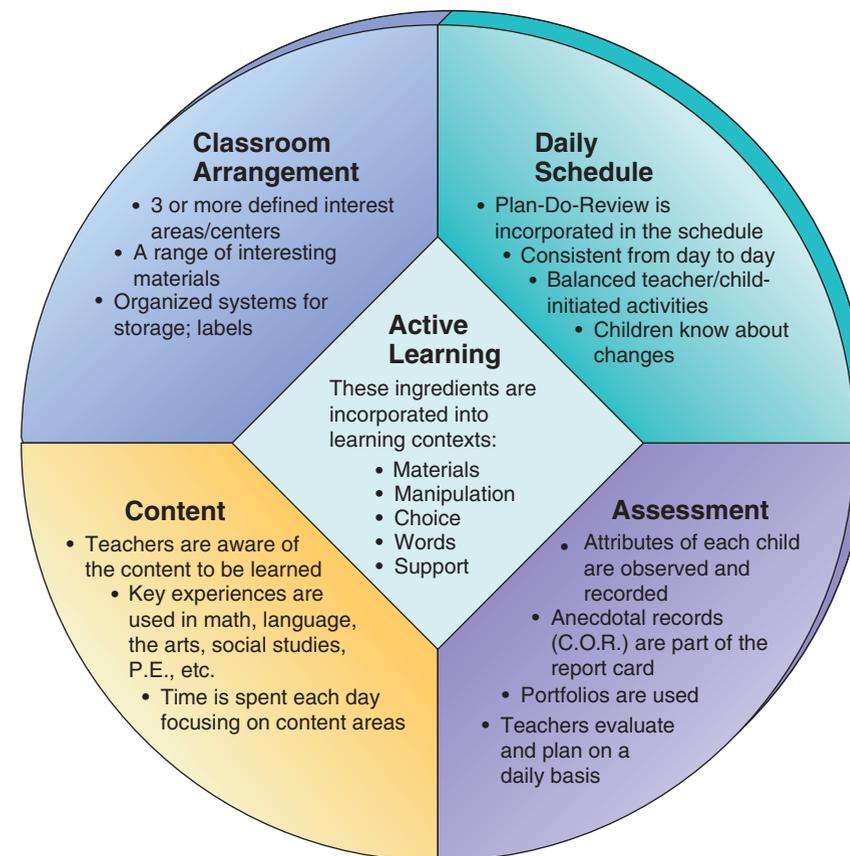
### THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF THE HIGH/SCOPE APPROACH

Teachers create the context for learning in the High/Scope approach by implementing and supporting five essential elements: active learning, classroom arrangement, the daily schedule, assessment, and the curriculum (content).

**Active Learning.** The idea that children are the source of their own learning forms the center of the High/Scope curriculum. Teachers support children’s **active learning** by providing a variety of materials, making plans and reviewing activities with children, interacting with and carefully observing individual children, and leading small- and large-group active learning activities.

**Classroom Arrangement.** The classroom arrangement invites children to engage in personal, meaningful, educational experiences. In addition, the classroom contains three or more interest areas that encourage choice.

**Active learning**  
Involvement of the child with materials, activities, and projects in order to learn concepts, knowledge, and skills.



**FIGURE 6.4**  
**High/Scope Curriculum Wheel**

Source: Reprinted by permission of High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 600 N. River St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898.



In the High/Scope segment of the DVD, listen to and observe the plan-do-review process that is a central feature of the High/Scope approach.

**High/Scope** An educational program for young children based on Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s ideas.

**Companion Website**  
For more information about High/Scope, go to the Companion Website at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Linking to Learning module.

## HIGH/SCOPE IN PRACTICE

The High/Scope educational approach and curriculum for three- to five-year-olds is a developmental model based on the principle of *active learning*. The following beliefs underlie this approach:

- Children construct knowledge through their active involvement with people, materials, events, and ideas, a process that is intrinsically motivated.
- While children develop capacities in a predictable sequence, adult support contributes to their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development.
- Consistent adult support and respect for children's choices, thoughts, and actions strengthen the children's self-respect, feelings of responsibility, self-control, and knowledge.
- Careful observation of children's interests and intentions is a necessary step in understanding their level of development and planning and carrying out appropriate interactions with them.

In High/Scope programs these principles are implemented throughout the day, both through the structure of the daily routine and in the strategies adults use as they work with the children. The staff of each program plan for the day's experiences, striving to create a balance between adult- and child-initiated activity.

As they plan activities, staff members consider five factors of intrinsic motivation that research indicates are essential for learning: enjoyment, interest, control, probability of success, and feelings of competence. During greeting-circle and small-group time, staff members actively involve the children in decisions about activities and materials as a way of supporting their intrinsic motivation to learn. This emphasis on child choice continues throughout the day, even during activities initiated by adults.

### A DAY AT A HIGH/SCOPE PROGRAM

Each program may implement the High/Scope approach in a slightly different way. A typical day's activities at Giving Tree School are described here.

**The day begins with greeting circle.** After putting their photos on the attendance board, the children gather as the teacher begins a well-known animal finger play, and they join in immediately. Then the teacher suggests that the

group make a circus of animals that are moving in many ways. Two children do not want to be animals, and the teacher suggests that these children may want to be the audience. They get chairs and prepare to watch.

The children suggest elephants, bears, and alligators as animals for the group to imitate. Then they parade before the audience, pretending to be those animals and moving to the music. At the close of greeting time, the teacher suggests that the children choose an animal to be as they move to the next activity, small-group time. During small-group time the children make inventions of their choice with recyclable materials the teacher has brought in and pine cones they collected the previous day. Each child uses the materials *in his or her own way*.

**As small-group activities are completed, planning time begins.** The teacher asks the younger children to indicate their plans for "work" time by going to get something they will use in their play. The older children draw or copy the symbols or letters that stand for the area in which they plan to play. (Each play area is labeled with a sign containing both a simple picture symbol and words for the area.) To indicate his plan, Charlie, age three, gets a small hollow block and brings it to the teacher. "I'm going to make a train. That's all," he says. Aja, age four, brings a dress and a roll of tape. "I'm going to the playhouse to be the mommy, and then I'm going to the art area to make something with tape," she explains. Five-year-old Ashley shows the teacher her drawing of the tub table and the scoops she will use with the rice at the table.

**During work time the teachers participate in children's play.** Riding on Charlie's train, one teacher shows Tasha how to make the numerals 3 and 5 for train tickets, then joins two children playing a board game, and finally listens to Aja explain how she made a doll bed out of tape and a box. Another teacher helps Nicholas and Charlie negotiate a conflict over a block, encouraging them by listening and asking questions until they agree on a solution.

As the children are given a five-minute warning that it is almost time to clean up, the teachers tell them that today there will be a parade cleanup. When they hear the music, they can parade in any way they want, and when the music stops, they can choose a place nearby to clean up. These playful cleanup strategies are varied every day,

and children look forward to the community cleanup process.

**At recall time the children gather with their earlier small groups.** Standing in a circle, each group rotates a hula hoop through their hands as they sing a short song (one of many such facilitating techniques). When the song ends, the child nearest the tape on the hoop is first to recall his or her work-time experiences. Charlie tells about the train he made out of blocks. Nicholas describes the special speed sticks he played with, Aja shows her doll bed, and Tasha describes her tickets. After their snack the children get their coats on and discuss what they will do outside. "Let's collect more pine cones. We can use them for food for the baby alligators." "Let's go on the swings. I just learned how to pump." "Let's see if we can find more bugs hiding under the rocks. They go there for winter." The teacher responds, "I'd like to help you look for bugs."

### KEY EXPERIENCES

As children play, they are actively involved in solving problems, and they are participating in many of the

High/Scope key experiences. They are fifty-eight key experiences that fall into ten categories: *social relation and initiative, language, creative representation, music, movement, classification, seriation, numbers, space, and time*. Teachers use the fifty-eight key experiences as guides for understanding development, planning activities, and describing the thinking and actions involved in children's play.

The High/Scope approach to learning supports developmentally appropriate, active learning experiences for each child as it encourages decision making, creative expression, problem solving, language and literacy, and other emerging abilities.

Contributed by Betsy Evans, conflict resolution specialist, Kids and Conflict, Gill, Massachusetts, and field consultant, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

The classroom organization of materials and equipment supports the daily routine—children know where to find materials and what materials they can use. This encourages development of self-direction and independence. The floor plan in Figure 6.5 shows how room arrangement supports and implements the program's philosophy, goals, and objectives and how a center approach (e.g., books, blocks, computers, dramatic play, art, construction) provides space for large-group activities and individual work. In a classroom where space is at a premium, the teacher makes one area serve many different purposes.

The teacher selects the centers and activities to use in the classroom based on several considerations:

- Interests of the children (e.g., kindergarten children are interested in blocks, housekeeping, and art)
- Opportunities for facilitating active involvement in seriation, number, time relations, classification, spatial relations, and language development
- Opportunities for reinforcing needed skills and concepts and functional use of those skills and concepts

Arranging the environment, then, is essential to implementing a program's philosophy. This is true for Montessori, High/Scope, and every other program.

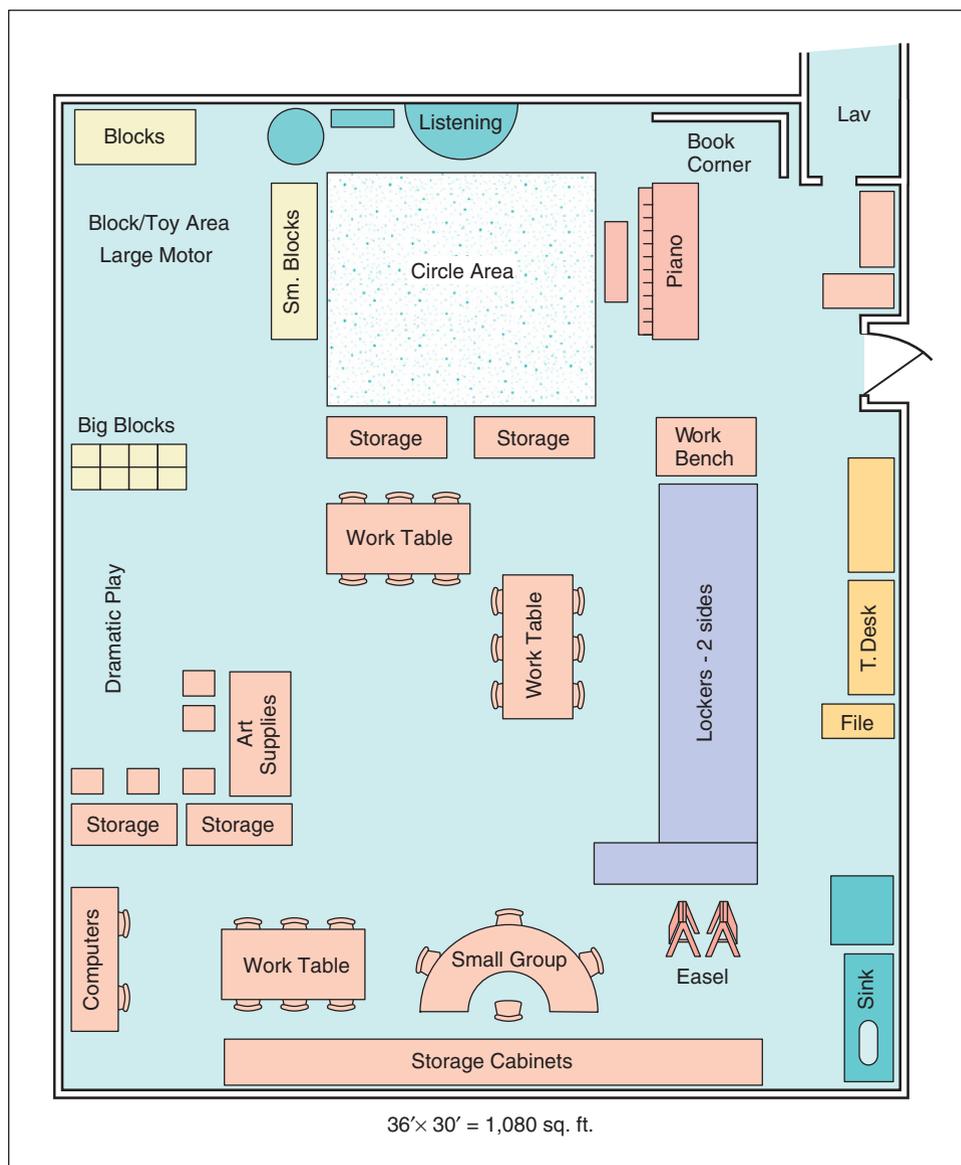
**Daily Schedule.** The schedule considers developmental levels of children, incorporates a sixty- to seventy-minute **plan-do-review** process, provides for content areas, is as consistent throughout the day as possible, and contains a minimum number of transitions.



Notice the facial expressions of these children as they engage in active, hands-on learning with manipulative materials. Certainly this picture is worth a thousand words in conveying the power of active learning.

**FIGURE 6.5**  
A High/Scope  
Kindergarten  
Classroom  
Arrangement

Source: Reprinted by permission of High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 600 N. River St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898.



**Assessment.** Teachers keep notes about significant behaviors, changes, statements, and things that help them better understand a child's way of thinking and learning. Teachers use two mechanisms to help them collect data: the key experiences note form and a portfolio. The High/Scope Child Observation Record (see chapter 3) is also used to assess children's development.

**Curriculum.** The High/Scope curriculum comes from two sources: children's interests and the key experiences, which are lists of observable learning behaviors (see Figure 6.6). Basing a curriculum in part on children's interests is very constructivist and implements the philosophies of Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky.

### A DAILY ROUTINE THAT SUPPORTS ACTIVE LEARNING

The High/Scope curriculum's daily routine is made up of a plan-do-review sequence and several additional elements. The plan-do-review sequence gives children opportunities to express intentions about their activities while keeping the teacher intimately involved in the

whole process. The following five processes support the daily routine and contribute to its successful functioning.

**Planning Time.** **Planning time** gives children a structured, consistent chance to express their ideas to adults and to see themselves as individuals who can act on decisions. They experience the power of independence and are conscious of their intentions. This supports the development of purpose and confidence.

The teacher talks with children about the plans they have made before the children carry them out. This helps children clarify their ideas and think about how to proceed. Talking with children about their plans provides an opportunity for the teacher to encourage and respond to each child's ideas, to suggest ways to strengthen the plans so they will be successful, and to understand and gauge each child's level of development and thinking style. Children and teachers benefit from these conversations and reflections. Children feel reinforced and ready to start their work, while teachers have ideas of what opportunities for extension might arise, what difficulties children might have, and where problem solving may be needed. In such a classroom, children and teachers are playing appropriate and important roles.

**Key Experiences.** Teachers continually encourage and support children's interests and involvement in activities that occur within an organized environment and a consistent routine. Teachers plan for **key experiences** that may broaden and strengthen children's emerging abilities. Children generate many of these experiences on their own; others require teacher guidance. Many key experiences are natural extensions of children's projects and interests. Figure 6.6 identifies key experiences for children in pre-K programs.

**Work Time.** This part of the plan-do-review sequence is generally the longest time period in the daily routine. The teacher's role during **work time** is to observe children to see how they gather information, interact with peers, and solve problems, and when appropriate, teachers enter into the children's activities to encourage, extend, and set up problem-solving situations.

**Cleanup Time.** During cleanup time, children return materials and equipment to their labeled places and store their incomplete projects, restoring order to the classroom. All children's materials in the classroom are within reach and on open shelves. Clear labeling enables children to return all work materials to their appropriate places.

**Recall Time.** **Recall time**, the final phase of the plan-do-review sequence, is the time when children represent their work-time experience in a variety of developmentally appropriate ways. They might recall the names of the children they involved in their plan, draw a picture of the building they made, or describe the problems they encountered. Recall strategies include drawing pictures, making models, physically demonstrating how a plan was carried out, or verbally recalling the events of work time. The teacher supports children's linking of the actual work to their original plan.

This review permits children to reflect on what they did and how it was done. It brings closure to children's planning and work-time activities. Putting their ideas and experiences into words also facilitates children's language development. Most important, it enables children to represent to others their mental schemes.

### PROVIDING FOR DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY

The High/Scope curriculum is a developmentally appropriate approach that is child centered and promotes active learning. The use of learning centers, active learning, and the plan-do-review cycle, as well as allowing children to progress at their own pace, provides for children's individual and special needs. High/Scope teachers emphasize the broad

**Planning time** A time when children plan and articulate their ideas, choices, and decisions about what they will do.



In the High/Scope segment of the DVD, observe as the teacher leads the children in planning time and helps them begin to make their own decisions and structure their own learning.

**Key experiences** Activities that foster developmentally important skills and abilities.

**Work time** The period of time when children carry out their plans and are engaged in a project or activity.

**Recall time** The time in which children form mental pictures of their work-time experiences and discuss them with their teachers.



**Companion Website** To complete a Program in Action activity related to the High/Scope approach, go to the Companion Website at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Program in Action module.

FIGURE 6.6 Key Experiences in a High/Scope Preschool Curriculum

CREATIVE REPRESENTATION

- Recognizing objects by sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell
- Imitating actions and sounds
- Relating models, pictures, and photographs to real places and things
- Pretending and role playing
- Making models out of clay, blocks, and other materials
- Drawing and painting

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

- Talking with others about personally meaningful experiences
- Describing objects, events, and relations
- Having fun with language: listening to stories and poems, making up stories and rhymes
- Writing in various ways: drawing, scribbling, letterlike forms, invented spelling, and conventional forms
- Reading in various ways: reading storybooks, signs and symbols, one's own writing
- Dictating stories

INITIATIVE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

- Making and expressing choices, plans, and decisions
- Solving problems encountered in play
- Taking care of one's own needs
- Expressing feelings in words
- Participating in group routines
- Being sensitive to the feelings, interests, and needs of others
- Building relationships with children and adults
- Creating and experiencing collaborative play
- Dealing with social conflict

CLASSIFICATION

- Exploring and describing similarities, differences, and the attributes of things
- Distinguishing and describing shapes
- Sorting and matching
- Using and describing something in several ways
- Holding more than one attribute in mind at a time
- Distinguishing between *some* and *all*
- Describing characteristics that something does *not* possess or what class it does *not* belong to

SERIATION

- Comparing attributes (longer/shorter, bigger/smaller)
- Arranging several things one after another in a series or pattern and describing the relationships (big/bigger/biggest, red/blue/red/blue)
- Fitting one ordered set of objects to another through trial and error (small cup—small saucer/medium cup—medium saucer/big cup—big saucer)

Figure 6.6 Continued

NUMBER

- Comparing the numbers of things in two sets to determine *more, fewer, same number*
- Arranging two sets of objects in one-to-one correspondence
- Counting objects

SPACE

- Filling and emptying
- Fitting things together and taking them apart
- Changing the shape and arrangement of objects (wrapping, twisting, stretching, stacking, enclosing)
- Observing people, places, and things from different spatial viewpoints
- Experiencing and describing positions, directions, and distances in the play space, building, and neighborhood
- Interpreting spatial relations in drawings, pictures, and photographs

TIME

- Starting and stopping an action on signal
- Experiencing and describing rates of movement
- Experiencing and comparing time intervals
- Anticipating, remembering, and describing sequences of events

Source: Reprinted by permission from Nancy Altman Brickman, ed., "Key Experiences in the Preschool Classroom," *Supporting Young Learners 3* (Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press, 2001): 143–216.

cognitive, social, and physical abilities that are important for all children, instead of focusing on a child's deficits. High/Scope teachers identify where a child is developmentally and then provide a rich range of experiences appropriate for that level. For example, they would encourage a four-year-old who is functioning at a two-year-old level to express his or her plans by pointing, gesturing, and saying single words, and they would immerse the child in a conversational environment that provided many natural opportunities for using and hearing language.<sup>16</sup>

Many early childhood programs for children with special needs incorporate the High/Scope approach. For example, the Regional Early Childhood Center at Rockburn Elementary School in Elkridge, Maryland, operates a full-day multiple-intense-needs class for children with disabilities and typically developing peers and uses the High/Scope approach. The daily routine includes greeting time, small groups (e.g., art, sensory, preacademics), planning time (i.e., picking a center), work time at the centers, cleanup time, recall (i.e., discussing where they "worked"), snacks, circle time with stories, movement and music, and outside time.<sup>17</sup>

### FURTHER THOUGHTS

The High/Scope approach represents one approach to educating young children. Whereas Montessori, Emilia Reggio, and Waldorf are European based in philosophy and context, High/Scope puts into practice the learning-by-doing American philosophy. It builds on Dewey's ideas of active learning and teaching in the context of children's interests.

High/Scope is widely used in Head Start and early childhood programs across the United States; High/Scope research has demonstrated that its approach is compatible with Head Start guidelines and performance standards.

There are number of advantages to implementing the High/Scope approach:

- It offers a method for implementing a constructivist-based program that has its roots in Dewey's philosophy and Piagetian cognitive theory.
- It is widely popular and has been extensively researched and tested.
- There is a vast network of teacher training and support provided by the High/Scope Foundation.
- It is research based and it works.

As a result, the High/Scope approach is viewed by early childhood practitioners as one that implements many of the best practices embraced by the profession.

## REGGIO EMILIA

Reggio Emilia, a city in northern Italy, is widely known for its approach to educating young children.<sup>18</sup> Founded by Loris Malaguzzi (1920–1994), **Reggio Emilia** sponsors programs for children from three months to six years of age. Certain essential beliefs and practices underlie the Reggio Emilia approach. These basic features define the Reggio approach, make it a constructivist program, and enable it to be adapted and implemented in many U.S. early childhood programs. Read the Program in Action about the Reggio Emilia approach to understand its key elements.

**Reggio Emilia** An approach to education based on the philosophy and practice that children are active constructors of their own knowledge.



**Companion Website**  
For more information about Reggio Emilia, go to the **Companion Website** at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Linking to Learning module.

### BELIEFS ABOUT CHILDREN AND HOW THEY LEARN

**Relationships.** The Reggio approach focuses on each child and is conducted in relation to the family, other children, the teachers, the environment of the school, the community, and the wider society. Each school is viewed as a system in which all these interconnected relationships are reciprocal, activated, and supported. In other words, as Vygotsky believed, children learn through social interactions. In addition, as Montessori indicated, the environment supports and is important to learning.

When preparing space, teachers offer the possibility for children to be with the teachers and many of the other children, or with just a few of them. Also, children can be alone when they need a little niche to stay by themselves.

Teachers are always aware, however, that children learn a great deal in exchanges with their peers, especially when they interact in small groups. Such small groups of two, three, four, or five children provide possibilities for paying attention, listening to each other, developing curiosity and interest, asking questions, and responding. Also, groups provide opportunities for negotiation and ongoing dynamic communication.

**Hundred Languages.** Malaguzzi wrote a poem about the many languages of children. Here is the way it begins:

*The child is made of one hundred.  
The child has a hundred languages, a hundred hands, a hundred thoughts.  
A hundred ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking.<sup>19</sup>*

The hundred languages Malaguzzi was referring to include drawing, building, modeling, sculpturing, discussing, inventing, discovering, and more. Teachers are encouraged to create environments in which children can use all hundred languages to learn.

**Time.** Reggio Emilia teachers believe that time is not set by a clock and that continuity is not interrupted by the calendar. Children's own sense of time and their personal rhythms are considered in planning and carrying out activities and projects. The full-day schedule



# Program in Action

## REGGIO EMILIA

Boulder Journey School, a private school for young children in Boulder, Colorado, welcomes 250 children ages six weeks to six years of age and their families. As a school community composed of children, educators, and families, we are inspired and encouraged by our study of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Since 1995 we have engaged in an ongoing dialogue with educators in Reggio Emilia, as well as with educators around the world who are also inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education.

We think that the culture of our school emanates from our values, values that define the philosophy and pedagogy of the school. At Boulder Journey School our values are based on a strong image of children as

- **Curious**—From the moment of birth, children are engaged in a search for the meaning of life, seeking to understand the world that surrounds them and the relationships that they form and develop with others in their world.
- **Competent**—Children pose problems and ask questions, form hypotheses and create theories in an effort to answer their questions and find solutions to their problems.
- **Capable**—Using a hundred different languages, children are able to construct, deconstruct, re-construct, symbolize, represent, and communicate their understandings of the world.
- **Co-constructors of knowledge**—Children interact with other children and adults, sharing their unique identities and experiences, learning as individuals while contributing to the learning of the group.

Recognizing and maintaining an image of children who are filled with ideas that can be extended in depth and breadth is critical as we observe, document, and interpret their explorations and investigations. For example, during the experience captured by the photograph of infants and their teacher examining a glass bulb, the teacher observes the children's use of all their senses: the ways in which they gaze at, touch, and possibly attempt to taste, smell, and listen to the bulb. The teacher documents the experience, combining careful notes with photographs and video. She also notes the ways in which the children interact with one another and with her and how the sharing of ideas contributes to the evolution of the experience. Interpretation

of the documented experience with both colleagues and parents informs the teacher's choices of similar and different materials that can be introduced to the children.

As educators, we are not passive and objective recorders and analyzers of children's learning, but rather active participants in this learning. We are partners, along with families, in the children's research, seeking to make meaning along with them. Our role is to provide a structure that defines the children's research, supports it as it evolves, and makes it visible to others.

Carlina Rinaldi, executive consultant to Reggio Children, stated that as educators we do not produce learning but rather produce the conditions for learning, rich contexts in which children can realize their potential in dialogue with the environment and with others, children and adults. This statement leads us to wonder:

- How can we encourage the emergence of ideas, small moments during which a child or group of children is engaged in the process of thinking and learning?
- How can we nurture these ideas as they develop into long-term investigations?
- In what ways can the traces of these long-term investigations inform and communicate our understanding of how children learn?

At Boulder Journey School we try to answer these questions, considering the environment an essential element in the learning process. We think that the design of the environment of the school should be thoughtful, based on a consideration of the conditions necessary for learning. To encourage the emergence of ideas during small moments that provide possibilities for long-term investigations, the environment and the choice of materials within the environment must be intentional but also fluid, responsive to the children and able to evolve in harmony with the evolution of their ideas.

We also consider the organization of time a vital aspect of our work; time for reflection, dialogue, debate, and



In the Reggio Emilia segment of the DVD, observe how interactions of parents, teachers, and children create an active learning community.



negotiation, which supports and encourages connections among the entire school community. For example, the investigation of the marble blocks, portrayed in the photograph of children attempting to build a block tower, required time for planning, drawing, constructing, and problem solving that led to new plans, drawings, problems, solutions, and subsequent constructions.

Inspired by our study of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Boulder Journey School recognizes the value of building connections. We have built connections among the three protagonists of the learning process—the children, their families, and the educators within each of the classrooms—and we have built those connections throughout the school,

creating a school that thinks of itself as a learning community. For example, our documentation of the children's explorations of light, illustrated in the photograph of two children working with transparent materials on the overhead projector, led



to a school-community project in which families contributed materials to be used in conjunction with various sources of light, both natural and artificial. Families anticipated the ways in which the materials would be used; teachers documented the children's explorations of the materials and communicated their observations to families.

Additionally, we have challenged ourselves to think about building connections within our work, recognizing that the learning process in a school is both multifaceted and multidimensional. Although we acknowledge that we must often deconstruct the learning process in order to study individual aspects more closely, we consider it critical to put the pieces back into the entire context. For example, our study of the formation and maintenance of

infant relationships supported our understanding of the role of the environment, which must provide many opportunities for infants to interact with one another, as illustrated in the photograph of two infants in an upholstered tube. Viewing the environment as vital to the development of infant relationships also means giving serious consideration to relationships as a system that is critical to the learning processes of both children and adults.

As a learning community, Boulder Journey School has begun building connections with the community of Boulder, reaching out to learn from this community and most recently building connections focused on what the community can learn from the children. For example, pre-school children, parents, and teachers constructed a school grocery store and cafe called the Brown Bag, illustrated in the photograph of two boys at the checkout counter. The children visited several local grocery stores and shared their organization and pricing system with managers, leading to subsequent classroom investigations of currency and advertising.



We are also striving to build connections both nationally and internationally with other experiences inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy of education. We think of Boulder Journey School as a context in which relationships are created and maintained. It is a context of collegiality and collaboration, a context of creativity and expression, and a context in which the culture of the school, composed of its values, is defined and lived.

Contributed by Ellen Hall, owner and director, Boulder Journey School, Boulder, Colorado. Photos provided by Boulder Journey School, Boulder, Colorado.



provides sufficient time for being together among peers in an environment that is conducive to getting things done with satisfaction.

Teachers get to know the personal rhythms and learning styles of each child. This is possible in part because children stay with the same teachers and the same peer group for three-year cycles (infancy to three years and three years to six years).

## ADULTS' ROLES

Adults play a very powerful role in children's lives; children's well-being is connected to the well-being of parents and teachers.

**The Teacher.** Teachers observe and listen closely to children to know how to plan or proceed with their work. They ask questions and discover children's ideas, hypotheses, and theories. They collaboratively discuss what they have observed and recorded, and they make flexible plans and preparations. Teachers then enter into dialogues with the children and offer them occasions for discovering and also revisiting and reflecting on experiences, since they consider learning an ongoing process. Teachers are partners with children in a continual process of research and learning.

**The Atelierista.** An **atelierista**, a teacher trained in the visual arts, works closely with teachers and children in every preprimary school and makes visits to the infant/toddler centers.

**Atelierista** A teacher trained in the visual arts who works with teachers and children.

**Parents.** Parents are an essential component of the program and are included in the advisory committee that runs each school. Parents' participation is expected and supported and takes many forms: day-to-day interaction, work in the schools, discussion of educational and psychological issues, special events, excursions, and celebrations.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

The infant/toddler centers and school programs are the most visible aspect of the work done by teachers and parents in Reggio Emilia. They convey many messages, of which the most immediate is that this is a place where adults have thought about the quality and the instructive power of space.

**The Physical Space.** The layout of physical space, in addition to welcoming whoever enters, fosters encounters, communication, and relationships. The arrangement of structures, objects, and activities encourages choices, problem solving, and discoveries in the process of learning.

The centers and schools of Reggio Emilia are beautiful. Their beauty comes from the message the whole school conveys about children and teachers engaged together in the pleasure of learning. There is attention to detail everywhere: in the color of the walls, the shape of the furniture, the arrangement of simple objects on shelves and tables. Light from the windows and doors shines through transparent collages and weavings made by children. Healthy green plants are everywhere. Behind the shelves displaying shells or other found or made objects are mirrors that reflect the patterns that children and teachers have created.

The environment is also highly personal. For example, a series of small boxes made of white cardboard creates a grid on the wall of a school. On each box the name of a child or a teacher is printed with rubber stamp letters. These boxes are used for leaving little surprises or messages for one another. Communication is valued and favored at all levels.

The space in the centers and schools of Reggio Emilia is personal in still another way: it is full of children's own work. Everywhere there are paintings, drawings, paper sculptures, wire constructions, transparent collages coloring the light, and mobiles moving gently overhead. Such things turn up even in unexpected spaces like stairways and bathrooms. Although the work of the children is pleasing to the eye, it is not intended as decoration, but rather to show and document the competence of children, the beauty of their ideas, and the complexity of their learning processes.

**The Atelier.** A special workshop or studio, called an **atelier**, is set aside and used by all the children and teachers in the school. It contains a great variety of tools and resource materials, along with records of past projects and experiences.

**Atelier** A special area or studio for creating projects.

The activities and projects, however, do not take place only in the atelier. Smaller spaces called *miniateliers* are set up in each classroom. In fact, each classroom becomes an active workshop with children involved with a variety of materials and experiences that they have discussed and chosen with teachers and peers. In the view of Reggio educators, the children's use of many media is not art or a separate part of the curriculum but an inseparable, integral part of the whole cognitive/symbolic expression involved in the process of learning.



In the Reggio Emilia segment of the DVD, observe how teachers document children's learning and how documentation contributes to both children's and teachers' learning.

**Documentation** Records of children's work including recordings, photographs, art, work samples, projects, and drawings.

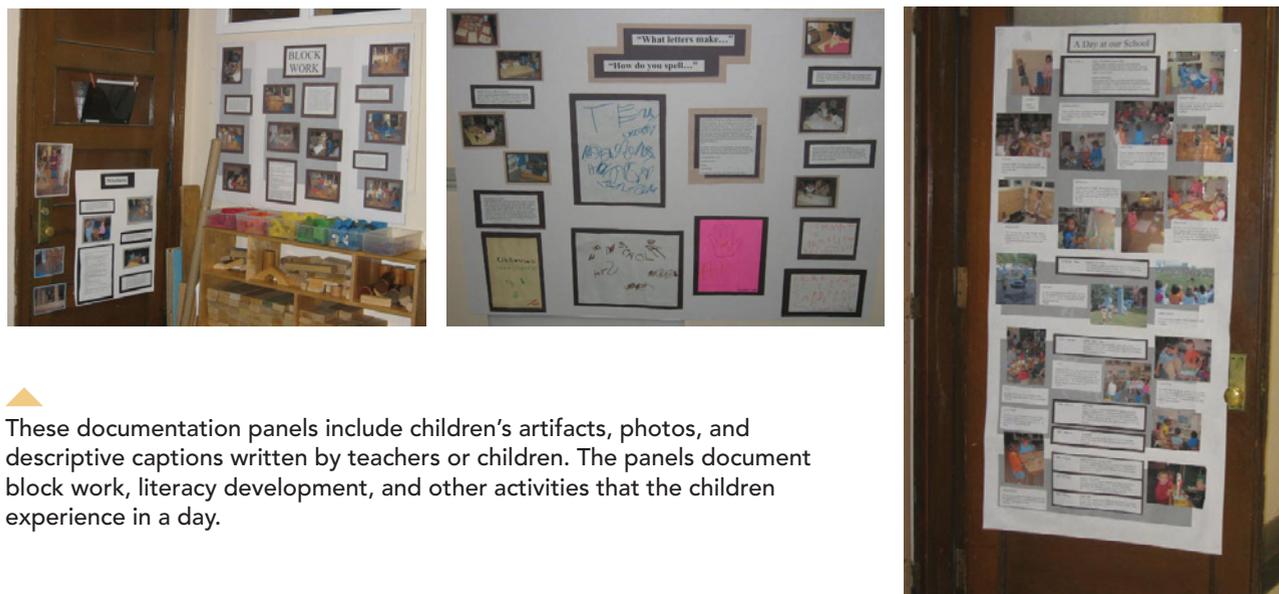
## PROGRAM PRACTICES

Cooperation is the powerful mode of working that makes possible the achievement of the goals Reggio educators set for themselves. Teachers work in pairs in each classroom. They see themselves as researchers gathering information about their work with children by means of continual documentation. The strong collegial relationships that are maintained with teachers and staff enable them to engage in collaborative discussion and interpretation of both teachers' and children's work.

**Documentation.** Transcriptions of children's remarks and discussions, photographs of their activity, and representations of their thinking and learning using many media are carefully arranged by the *atelierista*, along with the other teachers, to document the work and the process of learning. **Documentation** has many functions:

- Making parents aware of children's experiences and maintaining their involvement
- Allowing teachers to understand children better and to evaluate their own work, thus promoting professional growth
- Facilitating communication and exchange of ideas among educators
- Making children aware that their effort is valued
- Creating an archive that traces the history of the school and the pleasure of learning by many children and their teachers

**Curriculum and Practices.** The curriculum is not established in advance. Teachers express general goals and make hypotheses about what direction activities and projects



These documentation panels include children's artifacts, photos, and descriptive captions written by teachers or children. The panels document block work, literacy development, and other activities that the children experience in a day.

might take. On this basis, they make appropriate preparations. Then, after observing children in action, teachers compare, discuss, and interpret together their observations and make choices that they share with the children about what to offer and how to sustain the children in their exploration and learning. In fact, the curriculum emerges in the process of each activity or project and is flexibly adjusted accordingly through this continuous dialogue among teachers and with children.

Projects provide the backbone of the children's and teachers' learning experiences. These projects are based on the strong conviction that learning by doing is of great importance and that to discuss in groups and to revisit ideas and experiences is the premier way of gaining better understanding and learning.

Ideas for projects originate in the experiences of children and teachers as they construct knowledge together. Projects can last from a few days to several months. They may start from a chance event, an idea, or a problem posed by one or more children or from an experience initiated directly by teachers.

The **Project Approach**, which is so popular in early childhood education today, can trace its roots partially to Reggio Emilia practice. With the Project Approach, an investigation is undertaken by a small group of children within a class, sometimes by a whole class, and occasionally by an individual child. The key feature of a project is that it is a search for answers to questions about a topic worth learning more about, something the children are interested in.<sup>20</sup>

The Voice from the Field "How to Use the Project Approach" on pages 28–29 is a Competency Builder that shows how effectively you can use projects to teach young children traditional academic subjects, such as literacy.

## PROVIDING FOR DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY

Like the Montessori approach, Reggio places a high value on respect for each child. In a Reggio program everyone has rights—children, teachers, and parents. Children with disabilities have special rights and are routinely included in programs for all children.

The Grant Early Childhood Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is addressing the challenge of inclusion through Prizing Our National Differences (POND), a program based on the Reggio Emilia approach. The POND program includes all children with disabilities as full participants in general education classrooms with their age-appropriate peers. Four core ingredients of the Reggio approach facilitate successful inclusion at Grant Early Childhood Center:

- Encouraging collaborative relationships
- Constructing effective environments
- Developing project-based curriculums
- Documenting learning in multiple ways<sup>21</sup>

## FURTHER THOUGHTS

There are a number of things to keep in mind when considering the Reggio Emilia approach. First, its theoretical base rests within constructivism and shares ideas compatible with those of Piaget, Vygotsky and Dewey. Second, there is no set curriculum. Rather, the curriculum emerges or springs from children's interests and experiences. This approach is, for many, difficult to implement and does not ensure that children will learn basic academic skills valued by contemporary American society. Third, the Reggio Emilia approach is suited to a particular culture and society. How this approach works and flourishes and meets the educational needs of children in an Italian village may not necessarily be appropriate for meeting the needs of contemporary American children.

**Project Approach** An in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about.

 **Companion Website**  
To complete a Program in Action activity related to the Reggio Emilia approach, go to the **Companion Website** at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Program in Action module.

## HOW TO USE THE PROJECT APPROACH

Students in the K/1 classroom at University Primary School begin their day reading a daily sign-in question that is intended to provoke a thoughtful response:

Have you ever eaten the flowers of a plant?  
Do you think a van is more like a car or a bus?

Such questions are related to the topic under study and are used to engage children in discussing different views during their whole-group meeting later in the morning.

Opportunities for children to express themselves abound at University Primary School. In addition to an hour of systematic literacy instruction, authentic opportunities to read and write occur throughout the day in the course of the children's regular activities.

### INTEGRATING LANGUAGE ARTS WITH THE PROJECT APPROACH

The Project Approach involves students in in-depth investigation of worthy real-world topics;\* learning becomes meaningful for them as they pursue answers to their own questions. Students can carry out specific literacy-related activities in each phase of project investigation:

#### PHASE 1 Exploring previous experiences

- Brainstorm what is already known about a project topic

- Write or dictate stories about memories and experiences
- Label and categorize experiences

#### PHASE 2 Investigating the topic

- Write questions, predictions, and hypotheses
- Write questions to ask experts
- Write questionnaires and surveys
- Write thank-you letters to experts
- Record findings
- Record data
- Make all types of lists (what materials need to be collected, what will be shared with others, who will do which tasks)
- Listen to stories and informational texts read aloud
- Read secondary sources to help answer questions
- Compare what was read with what the experts shared

#### PHASE 3 Sharing the project with parents and others

- Make charts, displays, and PowerPoint presentations
- Write reports or plays that demonstrate new understanding

- Write invitations to a culminating event
- Share stories orally in readers theater

Throughout all phases of their project investigation, students have authentic contexts to read, spell, write words, and build their vocabulary. In addition, comparing what they knew with what they have learned from the primary and secondary sources, they develop their analytical thinking and comprehension skills. And they become more fluent readers and writers by using their skills to answer their own questions.



### PROVIDING DIRECT INSTRUCTION IN READING AND WRITING

The five reading components articulated in the No Child Left Behind Act—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—are taught throughout the students' day within the context of project investigation and during small-group direct literacy instruction. Direct instruction includes a whole-group meeting during which the teacher reads books aloud (i.e., shared reading) for specific purposes. The teacher may choose to highlight the project topic or specific authors or illustrators or to focus on rhyming words or specific patterns of phonemes.

Following the shared reading time, students engage in writing activities related to the books they heard read

aloud. These activities may include literature extensions that encourage students to write creatively. They may write a different ending to a story or write a related story from a different point of view. Students may also write their own stories, using the principles of writer's workshop, in which students learn to edit and extend their language skills. The teacher may also introduce extended minilessons on tools of writing, such as alliteration, similes, metaphors, or syllabic rhythms.

After their noon recess, students choose books to read quietly while the teacher provides individual guided reading. Project-related books may be a popular choice. Students conclude their silent reading with approximately ten minutes to engage in buddy reading. During the buddy reading time, students talk about what they have just read with their buddy and read favorite excerpts of their books to their buddy. This collaboration reinforces comprehension skills and instills the love of literature that motivates all children to read. At University Primary School, students are always improving and using their literacy skills to learn.

Contributed by Nancy B. Hertzog, associate professor, Department of Special Education, and director, University Primary School at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and by Marjorie M. Klein, former head teacher in the K-1 classroom at University Primary School and now an educational consultant in St. Louis, Missouri. Photo by Patrick White/Merrill.

\*L. G. Katz and S. C. Chard, *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach*, 2nd ed. (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 2000).

## WALDORF EDUCATION: HEAD, HANDS, AND HEART

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) was very interested in the spiritual dimension of the education process and developed many ideas for educating children and adults that incorporated it. Emil Molt, director of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany, was interested in Steiner's ideas and asked him to give a lecture to the workers regarding the education of their children. Molt was so impressed with Steiner's ideas that he asked him to establish a school for employees' children. Steiner accepted the offer, and on September 17, 1919, the Free Waldorf School opened its doors and the Waldorf movement began. Today, Waldorf education has developed into an international movement with close to nine hundred independent schools in fifty-five countries. There are over 157 Waldorf schools in North America.

Waldorf schools emphasize the teaching of the whole child—head, hands, and heart. This is the way Steiner envisioned such education when he planned his school:

Insightful people are today calling for some form of education and instruction directed not merely to the cultivation of one-sided knowledge, but also to abilities; education directed not merely to the cultivation of intellectual faculties, but also to the strengthening of the will. . . . but it is impossible to develop the will (and that healthiness of feeling on which it rests) unless one develops the insights that awaken the energetic impulses of will and feeling. A mistake often made . . . is not that people instill too many concepts into young minds, but that the kind of concepts they cultivate are devoid of all driving life force.<sup>22</sup>

Although Waldorf schools have many distinguishing characteristics, this dedication to teaching the whole child—head, hands, and heart—appeals to many teachers and parents.

Steiner believed that education should be holistic. In shaping the first Waldorf school, he said that from the start there was to be no classification of children into intellectual “streams,” no class lists, no examinations, no holding back in a grade or promoting to a grade, no prizes, no honors boards, no reports, no compulsory homework, and no pun-



Companion Website

For more information about Waldorf education, go to the Companion Website at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Linking to Learning module.

ishments of additional learning material. It was to be a school where teachers and children meet as human beings to share and experience the knowledge of human evolution and development in the world.<sup>23</sup>

## BASIC PRINCIPLES

Waldorf education, like the other programs we have discussed, operates on a number of essential principles (see Table 6.1).

**Anthroposophy** A philosophy developed by Rudolf Steiner that focuses on the spiritual nature of humanity and the universe.

**Anthroposophy.** **Anthroposophy**, the name Steiner gave to “the study of the wisdom of man,” is a basic principle of Waldorf education.

Anthroposophy, according to Steiner, is derived from the Greek: anthros “man” and sophia “wisdom.” Anthroposophy, Steiner claimed, offered a step-by-step guide for spiritual research. Anthroposophical thinking, according to Steiner, could permit one to gain a “new” understanding of the human being—body and spirit.<sup>24</sup>

Anthroposophy is a personal path of inner spiritual work that is embraced by Waldorf teachers; it is not tied to any particular religious tradition. The teacher, through devotion to truth and knowledge, awakens the student’s reverence for beauty and truth. Steiner believed that each person is capable of tapping the spiritual dimension, which then provides opportunities for higher and more meaningful learning.

**Respect for Development.** Waldorf education is based squarely on respect for children’s processes of development and their developmental stages. Individual children’s development determines how and when Waldorf teachers introduce curriculum topics. Respecting children’s development and the ways they learn is an essential foundation of all early childhood programs.

**Eurythmy** Steiner’s art of movement, which makes speech and music visible through action and gesture.

**Eurythmy.** **Eurythmy** is Steiner’s art of movement, which makes speech and music visible through action and gesture and enables children to develop a sense of harmony and balance. Thus, as they learn reading, they are also becoming the letters through physical gestures. According to Steiner, every sound—speech or music—can be interpreted through gesture and body movement; for example, in learning the letter *o*, children form the letter with their arms while saying the sound for *o*. In the main-lesson books that are the children’s textbooks, crayoned pictures of mountains and trees metamorphose into letters *M* and *T*, and form drawings of circles and polygons that become the precursor to cursive writing. Mental imagery for geometrical designs supports the fine-motor skills of young children.<sup>25</sup>

Rhythm is an important component of all these activities. Rhythm (i.e., order or pattern in time) permeates the entire school day as well as the school year, which unfolds around celebrating festivals drawn from different religions and cultures.<sup>26</sup>

**Nurturing Imagination.** Folk and fairy tales, fables, and legends are integrated throughout the Waldorf curriculum. These enable children to explore the traditions of many cultures, thus supporting a multicultural approach to education. They also enrich the imaginative life of the young child and promote free thinking and creativity.

## CURRICULUM FEATURES

Common features of the Waldorf curriculum include these:

- Teaching according to developmental stages, the right subject at the right time
- The timing and method of introducing several basic skills, consistent with these developmental stages

- The use of eurythmy in learning
- The inclusion of other arts, as well as handwork
- The sequential linkage between subjects, corresponding to the student’s maturity from year to year<sup>27</sup>

The Waldorf curriculum unfolds in main-lesson blocks of three or four weeks. The students create their own texts, or main-lesson books, for each subject. This enables them to delve deeply into the subject.<sup>28</sup>

The accompanying Program in Action introduces the Austin Waldorf School and enables you to experience Waldorf education in action.

## PROVIDING FOR DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY

Providing for and being sensitive to diversity is an important aspect of Waldorf education. From first grade the curriculum for all students includes the study of two foreign languages. In addition, the curriculum integrates the study of religions and cultures. As a result, children learn respect for people of all races and cultures.

Waldorf schools can also experience a certain level of success with children who have been diagnosed with disabilities such as dyslexia. Because Waldorf teaches to all of the senses, there is usually a modality that a child can use to successfully learn curriculum material.

Some Waldorf schools are devoted entirely to the education of children with special needs. For example, Somerset School in Colfax, California, offers a variety of programs designed to meet the special needs of students aged six to seventeen years who are unable to participate in regular classroom activities. Teachers, physicians, and therapists work closely with parents to create and implement individualized lesson plans.<sup>29</sup>

## FURTHER THOUGHTS

Certainly Waldorf education has much that is appealing: its emphasis on providing education for the whole child, the integration of the arts into the curriculum, the unhurried approach to education and schooling, and the emphasis on learning by doing.

On the other hand, Waldorf education, like the Montessori approach, seems better suited to private, tuition-based education and has not been widely adopted into the public schools.

Several reasons could account for this limited adoption. First, public schools, especially in the context of contemporary schooling, are much more focused on academic achievement and accountability. Second, Waldorf education may not be philosophically aligned with mainstream public education. Waldorf’s emphasis on the spiritual aspect of each child may be a barrier to widespread public school adoption. Identification of a student’s spiritual self has provoked criticism of Waldorf education, as well as humanistic education and other approaches to holistic practices.

In addition, there are a number of other features of Waldorf education that some critics object to. These include delaying learning to read, not using computers and other technology in the classroom until high school, and discouraging television viewing and the playing of video games.

Although some see Waldorf as too elitist, the schools remain a popular choice for parents who want this type of education for their children. The intimate learning atmosphere of small classes, the range of academic subjects, and the variety of activities can be very attractive.



**Companion Website**  
To complete a Program in Action activity related to Waldorf education, go to the [Companion Website](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison) at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Program in Action module.

## THE AUSTIN WALDORF SCHOOL

Fundamental to Waldorf education is the recognition that each human being is a unique individual who passes through distinct life stages, and it is the responsibility of education to address the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of each developmental stage.

### BASIC VALUES

At Austin Waldorf School in Austin, Texas, our guiding values are these:

- A lifelong love of learning
- Creative thinking and self-confidence
- A sympathetic interest in the world and the lives of others
- An abiding sense of moral purpose

Teachers create a school environment that balances academic, artistic, and practical disciplines, as well as providing daily opportunities for both group and individual learning. We develop these qualities in our students.

### THE ARTISTIC

Learning in a Waldorf school is an imaginative, enlivening, and creative process. The artistic element is the common thread in every subject; teachers integrate art, music, drama, storytelling, poetry, and crafts into the curriculum. Thus, students learn with more than their heads; they learn with their heads, hearts, and hands. For example,



in first grade the Waldorf student learns to knit. This activity develops the fine-motor skills of the child, ocular tracking, arithmetic (counting stitches), concentration, and focusing on completion of a task. The result—a beautiful piece of handwork and a child with pride.

### KINDERGARTEN (AGES 4–6)

Young children learn about the world through their senses and the use of their physical bodies. Teachers create a natural environment that exemplifies truth and beauty and reflects seasonal rhythms. For example, the

toys in a Waldorf classroom are made from natural materials (i.e., pieces of wood, baskets of shells or stones, beautifully dyed silks). A simple silk becomes a cape, a sail for a ship, an apron, or a blanket for the nature table, which is filled with treasures found outdoors. Waldorf education nurtures the physical, emotional, spiritual, and social development of the young child in preparation for the responsibilities and challenges of grade school and later life.

### Circle Time

During story time, the children sit quietly, engrossed in the tale being told. Their imaginations enriched by the story, they eagerly experience the joy of listening and discovering what comes next. Story and circle time provide the foundation for academics in kindergarten. Teachers teach language arts through the repetition of verses rich in imaginative pictures and rhythms. Through the telling of fairy tales, we promote the development of memory, listening skills, vocabulary, sequencing, imagination, well-articulated speech, and self-expression. Folk tales allow children to explore themes such as farming, grinding grain, house building, and blacksmithing, which are the beginning of social studies, history, and cultural studies.

Our kindergarten students also study mathematics and science. Mathematics includes counting games, rhymes, finger plays, jumping rope, setting the table, and measuring ingredients for baking bread. Science studies include nature walks, gardening, circle themes, water play, and direct experience and observation of plants, insects, and animals.

### Art and Movement

Artistic activities and movement abound in the kindergarten. Children participate on a weekly basis in watercolor painting, coloring, beeswax modeling, finger knitting, sewing, and seasonal crafts. Movement activities include eurythmy, rhythmic circle games, jumping rope, swinging, hopping, running, skipping, balancing, climbing, and participating in household tasks. Tasks such as sweeping, hand-washing the cloth napkins used at snack time and then hanging them on a line to dry, caring for the plants and the play area, all instill in the children a sense of reverence and respect for the space in which they spend their time.

The curriculum, which to the young child is play, develops individuals who can think for themselves, be creative in their endeavors, understand the importance of seeing a task to completion, and authentically experience the joy of discovery and learning.

### EARLY GRADES

In a Waldorf school, ideally, the teacher who greets a student on the first day of grade one will be the main-lesson class teacher through grade eight. The bond that is created between students and their teachers is extraordinary. A teacher grows with the children and knows the individual strengths and challenges of each child.

Between the ages of seven and fourteen, teachers meet students' specific developmental needs. These are addressed in a structured, socially cooperative, and noncompetitive environment. The curriculum includes comprehensive language arts, math, science, and social studies, classes in German and Spanish, vocal and instrumental music, speech and drama, eurythmy, painting, drawing, modeling, handwork, and woodwork. The school provides a physical education program, which in the middle school expands into competitive team sports.

The Waldorf curriculum is the same in Texas, California, England, and Israel. The differences lie in the freedom of the teachers to bring the curriculum to life through their individuality, human experiences, and teaching style.

### THE SCHOOL DAY

The day begins with the class teacher greeting every child at the door of the classroom with “Good morning” and a handshake. This allows a human connection to be made between the teacher and the students. The class work begins with the main lesson, a two-hour period devoted to the study of a particular academic discipline. The main lesson is taught in blocks lasting from three to four weeks, allowing the children and the teacher to delve deeply into a subject and then digest the content of the lesson. This approach allows for a concentrated, in-depth study while recognizing students' need for variety and time to integrate and comprehend subject matter.

The main lesson is a lively, interactive time, moving between artistic and intellectual activities that engage each student's faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing. Simply put, willing is doing, translating thought into activity. When a young child knits, the thinking (counting stitches), the feeling (creating something beautiful and

useful), and the willing (using the hands to work on the project and complete it) work in harmony.

Students' interest and enthusiasm are reflected in their main-lesson books, an artistic representation of what has been learned. Rather than using a standard textbook, the children artistically re-create the rich images and text from the material presented. A main-lesson book is the handwritten intellectual and artistic interpretation of the lesson recorded by the individual child.

### Language Arts

Teachers create a rich language environment that draws students forward to mastery of reading and writing. Teachers preserve the vitality of language through the recitation of playful verses and masterful poetry. Writing down well-loved stories addresses students' needs to be active in the learning process. Reading follows naturally when the content is already intimately connected to the students. In this way learning is less stressful, and all levels of literacy are addressed. Teachers present literature through the art of oral tradition in lively, engaging, and human presentations.



### Movement and Math

Movement and math go hand in hand as students step and clap rhythmically through the times tables. Numbers likewise begin with the children's immediate experiences and are made concrete by counting shells or stones kept in a special handmade pouch. A tactile relationship to numbers and counting gives the lesson a sensible meaning, which provides children with a foundation for following more complex mathematical processes.

Knitting and flute playing develop dexterity in head and hand. Exposure to the contrasting sounds of German and Spanish develops inner flexibility, setting the stage for later interest in and appreciation of other cultures and peoples.

Central to Waldorf education is the recognition of the individual human being. Every student

- participates in every subject and every activity
- fully experiences all of his or her potential
- possesses the ability to move through the world with confidence, direction, and purpose

Contributed by Kim Frankel, enrollment director, Austin Waldorf School, Austin, Texas. Photos by Kim Frankel.

### HOW TO TEACH RESPECT AND TOLERANCE IN ALL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

When I asked my class if anyone had seen the ball that was on my desk and my students said, “A bilingual took it,” I knew we had a problem. My third graders were prejudiced against a group of Spanish-speaking children whom they didn’t know and had very little contact with. Here are some tips for teaching respect and tolerance that I used to bring the groups together.

#### 1 Start a conversation

Ask an open-ended question. For instance, I asked my third graders, “What does *bilingual* mean?” Most kids had no idea. Some thought it meant “from Mexico” or “not too smart.” The first place to start was using our language arts skills to explore the actual definition of *bilingual*.

#### 2 Focus on what kids value

Would you like someone just because you were told to? Kids must earn their peers’ respect. So think about what kids value. Kids who can play sports or instruments well gain instant respect. Therefore, take every opportunity to showcase students’ talents. Have schoolwide talent shows, poetry readings, events at recess, or impromptu moments if the kids are willing. For instance, one student said she played “America the Beautiful,” a song that we were discussing in social studies. When the music room was free, we listened to her. Another student who dances in salsa style brought in a tape and showed us some moves.

#### 3 Use history and current events

Will Smith, Michael Jordan, and Jennifer Lopez make people forget race and color. Find historical and current people who are part of an ethnic group to stand as “cool” models. A well-liked student from the targeted group can help bridge a gap between groups. For instance, my students were pleasantly surprised when a popular kid in our class realized and announced, “I’m bilingual!”

#### 4 Put everyone in the same shoes

If differences are languages, teach a class or hand out papers in another language. If the differences are cultural, give a quiz on a cultural event from the minority group’s culture. Discuss with your students how it feels to be confused by language and culture.

#### 5 Focus on the same

Use the curriculum to give kids opportunities to discuss universal kid problems that illustrate how alike we are. For instance, in social studies discuss parental rules or annoying siblings. Use math to talk about allowances and bedtimes.

#### 6 Be a scout

Constantly be on the lookout for special talents and knowledge from your students. Students might not realize that making tamales or tuning pianos is unique. Use the curriculum to ask questions: Has anyone visited Puerto Rico? Does anyone speak two languages or three? Does anyone go to school on Saturdays? You and your students will be amazed at how interesting your class is.

One caution: When students see an individual getting accolades, they might attempt to do or say something to also get attention. To avoid this, discuss with the class that there are two ways to get noticed. One is to do bad things. The class will laugh when you remind them that everyone looks at the toddler who screams at a restaurant. Doing something exceptional or unique is another way. When their funny comments die down, they will agree that the second way is the best.

The best way for any two people to get along is to spend time together and build respect and trust naturally. Therefore, students interacting all day long in little ways will slowly learn to tolerate and appreciate differences. You might even be rewarded by seeing lasting friendships forged.

Contributed by Rebecca Leo, teacher, Enders-Salk Elementary, Schaumburg, Illinois.



**Companion Website**  
To complete a Diversity Tie-In activity related to teaching tolerance, go to the [Companion Website](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison) at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Diversity Tie-In module.

Even though all of the program models we have discussed in this chapter are unique, at the same time they all have certain similarities. All of them, regardless of their particular philosophical orientation, have as a primary goal the best education for all children.

As an early childhood professional, you will want to do several things now. First, begin to identify which features of these program models you can and cannot support. Second, decide which of these models and/or features of models you can embrace and incorporate into your own practice. An ongoing rule of the early childhood professional is to decide what you believe is best for children and families before you make decisions about what to teach.

As we end this chapter, there is one more thing for you to consider. All four of these programs emphasize the importance of teachers and children working closely together in order to learn with and from each other. Tolerance and respect make collaboration possible. The accompanying Diversity Tie-In gives you specific ways to promote tolerance and respect in your classroom.



#### Companion Website

For additional Internet resources or to complete an online activity for this chapter, go to the [Companion Website](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison) at [www.prenhall.com/morrison](http://www.prenhall.com/morrison), select chapter 6, then choose the Linking to Learning or Making Connections module.

### LINKING TO LEARNING

#### American Montessori Society

<http://www.amshq.org>

*Serves as a national center for Montessori information, both for its members and for the general public—answering inquiries and facilitating research wherever possible.*

#### Association Montessori International

<http://www.montessori-ami.org/>

*Founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori to maintain the integrity of her life’s work and to ensure that it would be perpetuated after her death.*

#### ERIC Reggio Emilia Page

<http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/reggio.html>

*Contains information and resources related to the approach to early childhood education developed in the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy.*

#### International Montessori Society

<http://imsmontessori.org/>

*Founded to support the effective application of Montessori principles throughout the world; provides a range of programs and services relating to the fundamental principles of (a) observation, (b) individual liberty, and (c) preparation of the environment.*

### Merrill-Palmer Institute Reggio Emilia Resources

<http://www.mpi.wayne.edu/resource.htm>

A comprehensive resource listing, including information on Reggio Emilia-related conferences, study tours, and general information on Reggio children, the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, and contact information for the North American Reggio Network.

### Montessori Online

<http://www.montessori.org/>

Site for the Montessori Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of Montessori education. Offers programs and resources to anyone interested in learning about Montessori education.

### Montessori Unlimited

<http://www.montessori.com>

A program that teaches the basis of Montessori—to respect oneself and one’s environment—and carries that basis, called practical life, into other areas of learning, including language arts, math, and science.

### North American Montessori Teachers’ Association

<http://www.montessori-namta.org/>

A membership organization open to parents, teachers, and anyone else interested in Montessori education.

## ACTIVITIES FOR FURTHER ENRICHMENT

### ETHICAL DILEMMA: “SHOULD I BECOME A BOARD MEMBER?”

City and Country Day School is a private, not-for-profit preschool in your community. City and Country operates in run-down facilities, serves only low-income children, and has a long waiting list. City and Country has a reputation of not using its resources wisely, and children entering kindergarten from City and Country generally do not do well. When board members suggest changes, the director becomes defensive and says, “If you can get someone else to run this place for what you pay me, hire him!”

Over the last several months several board members have resigned. One of your friends has shared with you that she was invited to serve on the board, but she responded, “I’m not going to waste my time on that mess. I have better things to do!” Last evening, the president of the board called and asked whether you would serve. He ended his plea with “I need some help standing up to the director.”

*What do you do—accept the invitation to be a board member in the hope that you can make a difference and help the children, or do you conclude from what you have heard about City and Country that it is beyond help?*

## APPLICATIONS

1. Which of the programs in this chapter do you think best meets the needs of young children? Would you implement one of them in your program? Why?
2. Write three or four paragraphs describing how you think the programs discussed in this chapter have influenced early childhood educational practice.
3. What features of Montessori, High/Scope, Reggio, and Waldorf do you like best? Why? What features do you like least? Why? What features are best for children?
4. Interview a Montessori school director to learn how to go about opening a Montessori school. Determine what basic materials are needed and their cost, then tell how your particular location would determine how you would market the program.

## FIELD EXPERIENCES

1. Visit various early childhood programs, including center and home programs, and discuss similarities and differences in class. Which of the programs incorporate practices from programs discussed in this chapter?
2. Compare Montessori materials with those in other kindergartens and preschool programs. Is it possible for teachers to make Montessori materials? What advantages or disadvantages would there be in making and using these materials?

3. Develop a checklist of best practices found in Montessori, High/Scope, Reggio, and Waldorf. Use your checklist to observe other programs. Tell how these programs do or do not demonstrate the best practices.
4. Visit or view on the DVD the four programs discussed in this chapter—Montessori, High/Scope, Reggio, and Waldorf. Observe each program and compare how the teachers implement the different practices. Based on your beliefs, rank the programs from 1 (best liked) to 4 (least liked). Explain why you ranked the programs as you did. Which of the four programs would you like to teach in?

## RESEARCH

1. Survey parents in your area to determine what service they desire from an early childhood program. Are most of the parents’ needs being met? How is what they want in a program similar to and different from the basic program features discussed in this chapter?
2. Search the AMS, AMI, and NAMTA websites for information about becoming a certified Montessori teacher. Compare the requirements for becoming a certified Montessori teacher with your university training. What are the similarities and differences?
3. Interview public and private school teachers about their understanding of the programs discussed. Do they have a good understanding of the programs? What are the most critical areas of understanding or misunderstanding? Do you think all early childhood professionals should have knowledge of the programs? Why?
4. Research which of the programs discussed in this chapter are available in your area. Which programs are more prevalent? What factors contribute to the prevalence of particular programs in your area?

## READINGS FOR FURTHER ENRICHMENT

Cadwell, L. B., and C. Rinaldi. *Bringing Learning to Life: A Reggio Approach to Early Childhood Education* (Early Childhood Education, 86). New York: Teachers College Press, 2003.  
*Describes real-life classrooms, including details on the flow of the day, parent participation, teacher collaboration, the importance of the environment, documenting students’ work, and assessment. Features many illustrations of children’s work as well as photos of Reggio-inspired classroom interiors and art materials.*

Catron, C. E., and J. Allen. *Early Childhood Curriculum: A Creative Play Model*, 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall, 2007.

*Provides information on planning programs with a play-based, developmental curriculum for children from birth to five years of age. Covers basic principles and current research in early childhood curricula.*

Hendrick, J., ed. *Next Steps Toward Teaching the Reggio Way: Accepting the Challenge to Change*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall, 2004.

*More than a presentation of the Reggio Emilia philosophy, also gives a progress report of the steps American and Canadian teachers have taken in the last six years toward teaching the Reggio Emilia way.*

Hohmann, M., et al. *Educating Young Children: Active Learning Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press, 2002.

*The official manual for High/Scope curriculum; outlines how to set up a High/Scope classroom, from setting up the learning environment to guiding adult interactions.*

Roopnarine, J., and J. Johnson. *Approaches to Early Childhood Education*, 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall, 2005.

*Focuses on models, approaches, and issues that deal with prominent and tested practices in early childhood education. Includes chapters on the family-center model, the Erikson approach, behavioral analysis, Montessori education, and constructivism.*

Spietz, H. A. *Montessori Resources: A Complete Guide to Finding Montessori Materials for Parents and Teachers*. Rossmore, CA: American Montessori Consulting, 2002.

*Contains in-depth reviews of products, information on where to buy supplies for integrated lesson planning, recommended computer software, and reviews and recommendations of foreign language products.*

Tanner, Laurel. *Dewey’s Laboratory school: Lessons for Today*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1997.

*A good resource that provides an informative description of how Dewey translated his progressive education ideas into the real world of enabling children to engage themselves in the process of learning.*

## ENDNOTES

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8. Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, trans. M. J. Costello (Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1966), 20.
9. Ibid., 46.
10. Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, trans. Claude A. Claremont (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967), 25.
11. Montessori, *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*, 131.
12. D. Guess, H. A. Benson, and E. Siegel-Causey, "Concepts and Issues Related to Choice Making and Autonomy among Persons with Severe Disabilities," *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps* 10, no. 2 (1985): 79–86.
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