



preface

I became a teacher of young children many years ago, when the field of early childhood education was quite different from what it is today. After graduating from college with an English degree, I got a job as a preschool teacher in a child care center. I will never forget my first day of teaching. One reason I remember it so well is that it was so long! Feeling completely incompetent, I seriously thought about not going back the next day. Then I realized that although I had a choice not to return, the children did not. They deserved a better teacher than I was at that time. As a result, I continued teaching, went back to school, and set out to learn as much as possible about child development and how best to teach young children. And I have been learning ever since.

Why I Wrote This Book

When I first began teaching, I realized that there were too many things I didn't know about child development, how and what to teach, how to communicate with families, how to positively guide children's behavior—the list goes on and on. I wrote this book because I wanted to help ensure that every child has a qualified teacher from day one.

In this book I share what I have learned about the competence of young children, their desire to learn engaging, challenging curriculum content, and effective ways of teaching. To achieve their potential, children need and deserve highly competent, well-educated teachers. My hope is that teachers, whether beginning their professional journey or continuing their professional development, will embrace new knowledge as well as the enduring values of early childhood education, and encounter the sheer joy of teaching young children.

New to This Edition

Early childhood education is an exciting, dynamic profession because new knowledge is being generated every day, as reflected in what's new in this edition.

- A completely revised Chapter 11 on assessment, with more focus on how to observe children's learning and development, assessment tools, and the role of assessment in meeting curriculum standards, teaching, and accountability.
- A new “Developmental Continuum” feature in Chapters 12 through 15 that describes the widely held expectations for children's development and learning from birth through age 8 and their linkages to curriculum planning and teaching.
- More emphasis on classroom examples of intentional teaching strategies throughout the book, including teaching dual language learners and children with diverse abilities.
- Examples of developmentally appropriate use of digital media with children, teachers, and families throughout the text.
- Updated and expanded discussion of current research on brain development, self-regulation, executive function, and other key developmental processes and implications for teaching.
- More artifacts and examples of children's work across the full age span from toddlers through primary grades.
- Increased emphasis on teacher reflection and application in “Becoming an Intentional Teacher” features and new end-of-chapter exercises, most of which include artifacts of children's work.
- New pedagogical features—tables, figures, and artifacts of children's work—that support teacher candidates' understanding, reflection, and application of their learning.



- Updated, readable research-based strategies and examples in every chapter.
- New sections in Chapter 2 that present a wider view of early childhood history, including that of Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and African Americans.
- Revised Chapter 9, Teaching to Enhance Learning and Development, and examples throughout of current research on effective, intentional teaching practices, including results of teacher observations using the CLASS and other assessment tools.
- Updated Chapter 10, Planning Effective Curriculum, to address the role of standards in curriculum planning—including the Common Core, Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, and state early learning standards—and how these affect assessment, age 3 to grade 3 curriculum alignment, and teaching.
- Revised Chapter 15, Teaching Children to Be Healthy and Fit: Physical Development and Health, with more emphasis on obesity prevention and rough-and-tumble play.
- Expanded Chapter 16, Putting It All Together in Practice: Making a Difference for Children, to include more examples and student reflection on professionalism and NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct.

Organization of This Book

This book is designed to teach the concept of *developmentally appropriate practice* for students because an understanding of its principles is the basic framework on which to build early childhood programs and schools for children from birth through age 8. Chapters are organized according to NAEYC's guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice, which I have co-authored for almost 30 years.

Part 1, Foundations of Early Childhood Education, describes how the current profession represents both continuity and change (Chapter 1), the rich history from which developmentally appropriate practices evolved (Chapter 2), and an overview of its principles and guidelines, which are described in depth in later chapters (Chapter 3).

Part 2, Dimensions of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, includes chapters describing the key factors teachers must consider as they make professional decisions. Chapter 4 presents an overview of current knowledge about how all children develop and learn. Chapter 5 addresses the unique, individual differences among children, including children with disabilities and special needs. Chapter 6 discusses the critical role of social, cultural, and linguistic contexts on children's development and learning and how teachers must embrace a diverse society to help every child succeed in school and life.

Part 3, The Complex Role of the Teacher, describes the role of the teacher in implementing developmentally appropriate practices. Each of the interconnected aspects of the teacher's role is addressed in separate chapters: building effective partnerships with families (Chapter 7), creating a caring community of learners and guiding young children (Chapter 8); teaching to enhance learning and development (Chapter 9); planning effective curriculum (Chapter 10); and assessing children's learning and development (Chapter 11).

Part 4, Intentional Teaching And Effective Curriculum—describes both *how* and *what to teach* children from birth through age 8 in language, literacy, the arts, mathematics, science, technology, social-emotional development, social studies, physical development, and health. Each chapter demonstrates how the continuum of children's development determines the appropriateness of curriculum content and intentional, effective teaching strategies for children of different ages.

Early childhood educators join this profession and stay in it because they believe their work can make a difference in the lives of children and their families. But to make a lasting difference, our practices must be effective—they must contribute to children's learning and development. This book reflects this core goal by building on the basic framework of developmentally appropriate practice while going beyond to emphasize intentional teaching, challenging and interesting curriculum, and evidence-based, effective practices for a new generation of early childhood educators. Each of these key themes is discussed on the following pages.

1

Continuity and Change in Early Childhood Education

thinking ahead

- 1 What is early childhood education?
- 2 Why become an early childhood educator? What are the dimensions of intentional, effective teaching?
- 3 What is high-quality early childhood education and how is it measured?
- 4 What does research say about the positive effects of early childhood education?
- 5 What are the current trends affecting early childhood education?





At Cresthaven Primary School, teachers, children, and family members of all generations are viewing children's work and sharing memories during the year-end celebration. This public school serves children from age 3 to grade 3, through a partnership with Reed Child Development Center nearby. The Reed Center provides state-funded preschool classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds who will attend Cresthaven as well as before- and after-school care and child care for infants and toddlers.

The preschoolers are in awe of the “big school” where they will attend kindergarten and are excited to see their work displayed in the hallway. “Look, Mommy! Here’s my painting of the yellow fish,” cries 4-year-old Amber as she tugs on her mother’s hand. “See where I wrote my name. And here’s Brenda’s picture. She’s my new best friend.” Amber’s mother smiles and tries to read what her daughter wrote: “I lk fsh.” The teacher, Ms. Engels, comes up and says, “Amber knows a lot about writing and letters. She can write her name, and she is starting to write the consonants she hears in words.”

For several years, Cresthaven School has been involved with its neighbors in a community garden project. In each class, the teachers connect the larger curriculum—especially science and social studies goals—to aspects of the garden project. Six-year-old Sergio and his grandmother walk down the hall to find the list of all the meals the kindergartners prepared with the vegetables they harvested. He exclaims, “And tonight, we get to eat strawberries!” Meanwhile, first-grader Mathias quietly explains to some parents, “Me and my friends made this graph. It shows the vegetables the kids liked most.” Third-grader Carola describes her class project to her father. “You’ll like this, Dad. For social studies, we’re figuring out where food comes from and why it costs so much.”

The second-grade teacher, Ms. George, gets everyone’s attention. “Our class is going to present their video of the garden project in 15 minutes.”

Seven-year-old Kelsey takes 75-year-old Mrs. Carrero by the hand and invites her to see the show. The children share most of the food raised in the garden with elderly neighbors such as Mrs. Carrero. “I’ll show you the chapter book I can read, too,” says Kelsey.



Four-year-old Cooper, who has autism, has been in Ms. Watson’s class for 2 years. His mother comes up and quietly whispers to Ms. Watson, “I wanted you to know that Cooper got invited to Martie’s birthday party. I never thought that would happen, but he’s made more progress here than I ever imagined.”

As she’s leaving, Nicky’s mom stops to thank Isela and Evan, who are finishing their first year of teaching 2-year-olds. They remember their struggles with Nicky’s tantrums as he hugs his mom’s leg and playfully peeks around at Evan. She says, “I know he is growing up and has to move to preschool, but we are really going to miss you two.” ▲

MyEducationLab

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Listening to these children, parents, and teachers, some new to the field and others with many years of experience, reveals the most exciting—as well as challenging—dimensions of early childhood education. Teaching young children is hard work. It takes energy, physical stamina, patience, a sense of humor, and a wide range of knowledge and skill. But early childhood professionals soon discover the rewards of their efforts. Nothing is quite as exciting as making a baby smile and giggle, seeing a toddler’s grin as he climbs the stairs on his own, or observing a preschooler’s serious look as she comes to the rescue as a pretend firefighter. And what can compete with a first grader’s feeling of utter accomplishment that accompanies learning to read?

Early childhood education is a rewarding profession for many reasons. We describe the diverse field of early childhood education and discuss its rewards in this chapter. We also discuss why early childhood education is a field on the rise and what the current trends are that present both challenges and opportunities. We also describe how, in a period of rapid change, the early childhood profession continues to be shaped by its enduring values. Above all, early childhood educators enter and stay in the field primarily for one reason—they know that their work makes a difference in the lives of children and families.

▲ What Is Early Childhood Education?

Early childhood education is a highly diverse field that serves children from birth through age 8. During these years, children participate in many different kinds of care and education settings. Regardless of where they work or what their specific job titles are, however, early childhood teachers are **professionals**. This means that they make decisions based on a specialized body of knowledge, continue to learn throughout their careers, and are committed to providing the best care and education possible for every child. The opportunity to make a difference in this exciting field has never been greater.

Why Early Childhood Education Is a Field on the Rise

Early childhood education benefits greatly from increasing public recognition, respect, and funding. Forty states—as diverse as Oklahoma, Georgia, New Mexico, New York, Illinois, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and Florida—provide funding for prekindergarten programs (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2011). Continued funding even in challenging economic times reflects growing public recognition of the benefits of early education, especially for children at risk of later school failure, but also for middle-class

early childhood education Education and child care services provided for children from birth through age 8.

professionals Members of an occupational group that make decisions based on a specialized body of knowledge, continue to learn throughout their careers, and are committed to meeting the needs of others.



children. For example, 73% of voters in one poll said they supported funding to improve the quality of child care even if it meant paying higher taxes (National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies [NACCRRA], 2010).

A great many policy makers, parents, and researchers now consider early childhood programs essential for fostering school readiness and long-term success in life (Barnett, 2008; Barnett et al., 2011). Groups such as the prestigious Committee for Economic Development (2010) consider early childhood education a necessary investment in the future of our country. A powerful advocate for early education, Nobel Prize–winning economist James Heckman (2011), believes that the best way to solve America’s problems and gain a more capable, productive workforce is to “invest in early development of cognitive and social skills in children from birth to age five and sustain early development with effective education through to adulthood” (no page number).

Early childhood education is also considered an effective crime-prevention strategy. In a letter to Congress, a national group of 5000 law enforcement officers stated:

As law enforcement leaders who have seen too many kids grow up to become criminals, we urge you to support early care and education investments that can make our communities safer and save taxpayer money (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2011).

Several factors have contributed to the rise in status of early childhood education. These include an impressive body of research on the positive effects of early childhood programs and concerns about the persistent achievement gap in our schools. Next we examine the overall landscape of the field, including the types of settings where children are served.

The Landscape of Early Childhood Education

Although early childhood terminology is not uniform across diverse settings, throughout this text we will use vocabulary that is consistent with that used by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** and that we feel best represents the present and future of the field. NAEYC, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is the world’s largest professional organization of early childhood educators. Founded in 1926, NAEYC’s mission is to act on behalf of the needs, rights, and well-being of all young children from birth through age 8.

One way the association achieves its mission is by establishing standards for teacher preparation at the associate, baccalaureate, and graduate-degree levels (NAEYC, 2011b). NAEYC’s standards have considerable influence in the field; it is likely that the course you are now taking is designed to meet the association’s teacher education standards. NAEYC (2007) also administers an accreditation system for high-quality children’s programs and provides resources such as publications and conferences to support teachers’ continuing professional development.

Given NAEYC’s definition of the field—birth through age 8—early childhood teachers work with various groups:

1. *Infants and toddlers*: birth to 36 months
2. *Preschoolers*: 3- and 4-year-olds
3. *Kindergartners*: 5- and 6-year-olds
4. *Primary grades 1, 2, and 3*: 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds.

Because early childhood is defined so broadly, the field encompasses child care centers and homes, preschools, kindergartens, and primary grade schools. Figure 1.1 provides an illustration of the various settings where young children are educated and cared for. Young children are always learning and they always need loving care. Therefore, it is important *not* to distinguish child care from early education, but rather to ensure that all children have access to programs that are both caring and educational, regardless of the length of day or who provides the service.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) The world’s largest organization of early childhood educators, whose mission is to act on behalf of the needs and interests of children from birth through age 8. NAEYC establishes standards for teacher preparation and accreditation of early childhood programs.

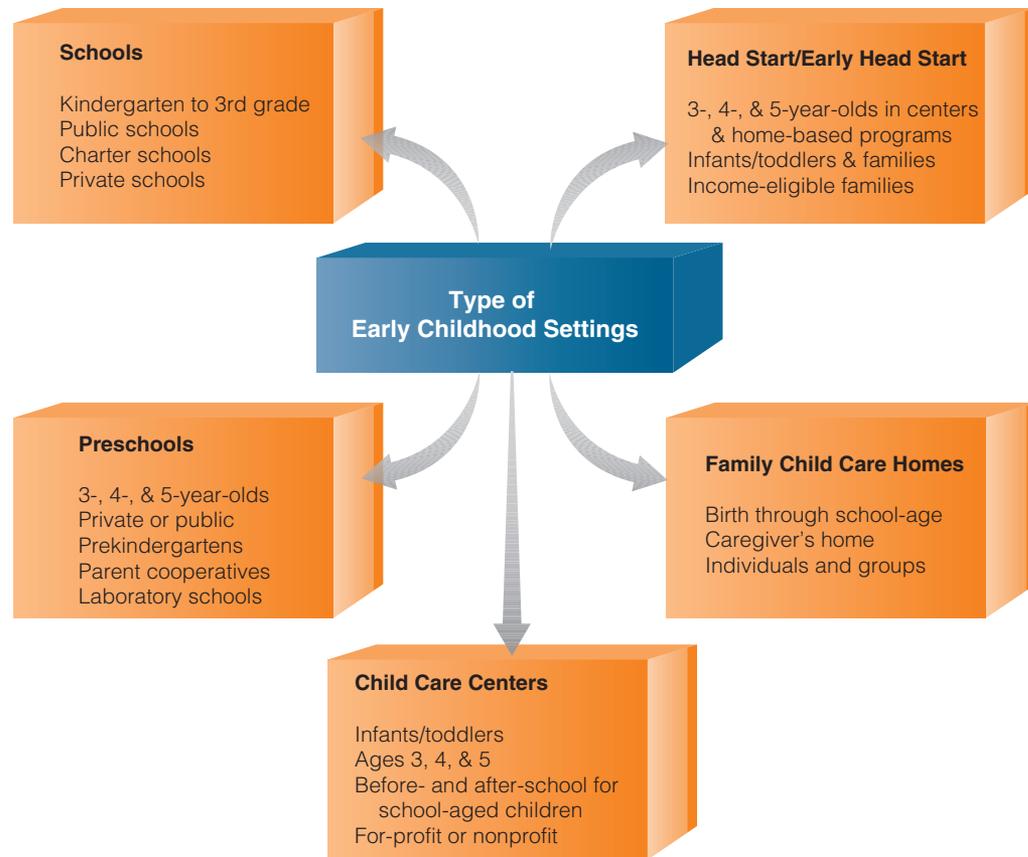


FIGURE 1.1 Types of Early Childhood Settings

child care center Group program that provides care and education for young children during the hours that their parents are employed.

family child care home

Child care in which caregivers provide care in their own homes for a small group of children, often multi-age groups.

preschool Educational programs serving 3- and 4-year-olds delivered under various sponsorships.

parent cooperative

Preschool program owned, operated, and partially staffed by parents.

laboratory school School operated by colleges and universities that usually serves children of students and faculty and also acts as a model of excellent education for student teachers.

Child Care

The term *child care* typically refers to care and education provided for young children during the hours that their parents are employed. To accommodate work schedules, child care is usually available for extended hours such as from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. In some settings, such as hospital-affiliated child care centers, care is offered for longer hours to accommodate evening, weekend, or even night-shift employment.

Child care is typically provided in two types of group programs: **child care centers** and **family child care homes**. In either setting, children's care may be privately funded by parent tuition or publicly subsidized for low-income families. Child care centers usually enroll children from infancy through preschool-age children, and many also offer before- and after-school care for primary grade children. In family child care homes, caregivers provide care in their own homes for a small group of children, often of varying ages. Family child care is the setting of choice for many parents of infants and toddlers because of its home-like atmosphere.

Preschool

Preschool programs, as the name implies, serve 3- and 4-year-olds prior to their entrance to kindergarten. Preschool programs may be operated by community organizations or by churches, temples, or other faith-based organizations and also by **parent cooperatives**, which are run and partially staffed by groups of parents. Preschools often operate half-day, although extended hours—the school day—are becoming more common. Some colleges and universities operate **laboratory schools**, which usually serve children of students and faculty and also act as models for student teachers.



Preschools are called by various names, including *nursery schools* and *prekindergartens*. (To further complicate matters, child care centers are also called preschools.) Preschool programs are both privately and publicly funded. Those that are primarily funded by parent tuition tend to serve middle- or upper-income families. Two particular types of preschool are designed primarily for children from low-income families: public prekindergarten and Head Start.

Public Prekindergarten

The term **prekindergarten (pre-K)** usually refers to preschools that are funded by state and local departments of education. Currently, public prekindergarten is in the news media regularly and is the fastest growing sector of the field, with enrollment increasing enormously in recent years. In 1980, 96,000 preschoolers were served in public elementary schools; by 2011, enrollment had increased to more than 1,300,000 children across 40 states (Barnett et al., 2011).

The primary purpose of prekindergarten is to improve **school readiness**; that is, to prepare children for kindergarten. Although some state officials narrowly define readiness as literacy and math skills, the early childhood profession uses a broad definition of school readiness that describes the whole child (National Education Goals Panel, 1995; C. Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2006):

- Language development and early literacy skills
- Cognitive development and general knowledge, including mathematics and science
- Social-emotional development
- Physical development and health
- Positive approaches to learning such as curiosity and motivation

The majority of public prekindergarten programs are designed for children from low-income families or those who are considered at risk for school failure due to conditions such as low levels of maternal education or speaking a language other than English in the home. However, a growing number of people are calling for funding of **universal voluntary prekindergarten**, the goal of which is to make these programs available to families of all income levels who choose to use them, which we discuss later in this chapter.

Head Start

Head Start is a federally funded, national program that promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children ages 3, 4, and 5. Head Start provides educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to the nation's poorest children and families whose incomes fall below the official poverty level (Head Start, 2011a). In recent years, Head Start has also focused on promoting the early reading and math skills needed for children's success in school. In addition to these comprehensive services, parent involvement is a special focus of the program. Parents volunteer in the classroom and also serve in governance roles, with the goal of empowering families to move out of poverty. In fact, more than 25% of Head Start staff members are parents of current or former Head Start children (Head Start, 2010b). About 12% of Head Start's enrollment is children with disabilities (Head Start, 2010b).

Head Start programs are quite diverse. Most Head Start children are served in classroom-based preschool programs, although in rural or remote areas, a home-based option is available. One of the smallest serves 30 children on the Havasupai reservation in the Grand Canyon, only accessible by helicopter or donkey, while the largest program serves over 22,000 children in 400 centers across Los Angeles (Head Start, 2011a).



Early childhood education includes child care centers, preschools, prekindergartens, family child care homes, and schools. But every high-quality program provides both loving care and education for young children and support for their families.

prekindergarten (pre-K)

Educational program serving 3- and 4-year-olds, usually in public schools.

school readiness Children's competencies related to success in kindergarten, including physical development, health, and well-being; social-emotional development and learning; cognitive development and general knowledge such as mathematics and science; positive approaches to learning such as curiosity and motivation; and language development and early literacy skills.

universal voluntary prekindergarten Publicly funded preschool usually for 4-year-olds but sometimes 3-year-olds; available to any family that chooses to use it.



Head Start Federally funded, national program that promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children ages 3, 4, and 5 through providing educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to the nation's poorest children and families.

Early Head Start Federally funded program serving low-income pregnant mothers, infants, and toddlers that promotes healthy family functioning.

early childhood special education Services for children with disabilities or special needs who meet eligibility guidelines that are determined on a state-by-state basis according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Federal law governing provision of services for children with disabilities and special needs.

early intervention Services for infants and toddlers who are at risk of developmental delay and their families.

inclusion Participation and services for children with disabilities and special needs in programs and settings where their typically developing peers are served.

kindergarten Typically considered the first year of formal schooling; serves 5- and 6-year-olds.

primary grades First, second, and third grade; sometimes includes kindergarten.

charter schools Independently operated, publicly funded schools that have greater flexibility than regular schools in meeting regulations and achieving goals.

The families represent all the racial and cultural groups in the United States (Head Start, 2010b). About 35% of the children are Latino and 30% are African-American. A sizable number of families—almost 8%—report that their children are bi-racial or multi-racial. In addition, the program has a special focus on serving American Indians, Alaska Natives, and migrant and seasonal workers. About one-third of the children speak a language other than English at home. Of these, 85% speak Spanish but 140 other languages are spoken. Most of these children, about 85%, are born in the U.S and are American citizens (Hernandez, Denton, & Blanchard, 2011).

In response to brain research and concerns that age 4 or even age 3 is too late for services to be effective, the government launched **Early Head Start** in 1995. Early Head Start serves low-income pregnant mothers, infants, and toddlers. It also promotes healthy family functioning. In 2010, there were more than 1,000 Early Head Start programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico (Center for Law and Social Policy [CLASP], 2011). Research on Early Head Start (Love et al., 2007) demonstrates that it achieves its promise of lasting positive effects on children and families.

Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education

Early childhood special education serves children with disabilities or special needs who meet eligibility guidelines that are determined on a state-by-state basis, according to the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. In addition to serving children with identified disabilities, some states provide **early intervention** services for infants and toddlers who are at risk of developmental delay and their families.

Federal legislation enacted during the past three decades has fundamentally changed the way in which early childhood services are organized and delivered to children with disabilities and special needs (Division for Early Childhood & NAEYC, 2009). These children, including children who are at risk for disabilities or who exhibit challenging behaviors, are far more likely to participate in a typical early childhood program than in the past. This trend, called **inclusion**, is defined and described in the *Including All Children: What Does Inclusion Mean?* feature.

All early childhood educators are likely to work with children with disabilities at some point in their careers. This inevitability broadens what teachers need to know right from the start, and requires that general early childhood teachers develop skills to collaborate with special educators.

Kindergarten and Primary Grades

Most 5- through 8-year-old children attend public schools, although many attend secular or faith-based private schools funded by parent tuition. Typically considered the first year of formal schooling, **kindergarten** has traditionally been designed for 5-year-olds. States establish varying dates for the legal entrance age to kindergarten, but 37 states require that children who are entering kindergarten must have their fifth birthday no later than September 1, although some use July 1 (Education Commission of the States, 2011). This means that kindergartens enroll many 6-year-olds.

First, second, and third grade are the **primary grade** years of school (6 through 8 years of age). These grades are especially important because during these grades, children are expected to acquire the fundamental abilities of reading and mathematics, along with the foundations of other academic disciplines including social studies, science, the creative arts, technology, and physical education. In first to third grade, children are learning to read; after that, they are expected to read to learn (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010). Therefore, if a good foundation is not laid during the primary years, children are likely to struggle in later years (Hernandez, 2011).

Forty states and the District of Columbia permit public funding of **charter schools**. Charter schools are independently operated and have greater flexibility than do regular schools for meeting regulations, but they must also meet accountability standards. In



Including All Children

What Does Inclusion Mean?

Mark and Monique Berger operate a family child care program in their home. Their state permits group homes such as theirs to serve up to 12 children. The licensing agent informs them that they are required by law to serve children with disabilities and special needs. One mother, whose son Barry has cerebral palsy, has inquired about enrolling him in their program. Mark wants to be sure that they abide by the law, but Monique is a little unsure about what it means to include a child with a disability in her child care home.

Although full inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs has been the law of the land for several years, Mark and Monique are not alone in being unsure about what it means. To help them and other professionals like them, the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children and NAEYC (2009) jointly developed a statement defining early childhood inclusion:

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential.

The statement describes the key features of high-quality inclusive programs, which are (1) access, (2) participation, and (3) supports.

A defining feature of high-quality early childhood inclusion is *access*, which means providing children with a wide range of learning opportunities, activities, and environments. In inclusive settings, adults also promote belonging, *participation*, and engagement of children with disabilities and their typically developing peers in a variety of intentional or purposeful ways.

Finally, an infrastructure of inclusion *supports* must be in place to ensure a foundation for the efforts of individuals and organizations that provide inclusive services to children and families. For example, Mark and Monique will need access to ongoing professional development and support to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to effectively meet Barry's needs and contribute to his development. In addition, specialized services and therapies for Barry will need to be coordinated and integrated with the other activities they offer the children.

Reference: Division for Early Childhood & National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). Early childhood inclusion: A joint position statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://community.fpg.unc.edu/resources/articles/files/EarlyChildhoodInclusion-04-2009.pdf>.

school districts where charter schools are an option, parents have a choice of where to send their children. From 1999 to 2009 the percentage of public schools that were charter schools increased from 2 to 5 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011b).

How Early Childhood Education Is Expanding

Participation in early childhood programs has increased steadily for many decades as more children participate in group programs at younger ages. In 1965, only 60% of 5-year-olds went to kindergarten, whereas today almost 95% do (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011a). A similar but steeper growth trend is apparent for younger children. In 1960, only 10% of 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in any type of early childhood program. In 2011, 40% of 3- to 5-year-olds were enrolled in preschool (Barnett et al., 2011) and many other young children participated in child care programs. Although the economic downturn has affected enrollment, all types of early childhood programs have seen growth over the years, including private preschools and child care centers, state-funded prekindergartens, preschool special education, and Head Start (Barnett et al., 2011; National Center for Education Statistics, 2011a).

Growth in Preschool Attendance

Changes in preschool participation are apparent in the findings of the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort* (Jacobson Chernoff, Flanagan, McPhee, & Park, 2007).



The study identified the primary setting where 4-year-old children received the most hours of early care and education. Only 20% were in no regular setting outside their home. Almost 60% were in a child care center, preschool, or Head Start center; 13% were cared for by a relative; and 8% were in a home-based, nonrelative care setting such as a family child care center or care provided by a neighbor or friend.

This study reveals that preschool, rather than kindergarten, is now seen as the first year of school for children (Jacobson Chernoff et al., 2007). The percentage of children who attend center-based preschools is approximately the same whether or not their mothers are employed. This finding indicates that the growth in preschool enrollment is related to increased demand for early education as much as increased need for child care (Barnett & Yarosz, 2007).

Child Care for Employed Families

Expansion of the early childhood field is directly related to the demand for child care for employed families. Currently, 64% of women with children under age 6 are in the labor force (NACCRRA, 2010). Infant and toddler care is a particular need because 58% of mothers of children under age 1 are in the workforce. Almost 80% of school-age children need child care for some hours of the day (Children's Defense Fund, 2011).

Recognizing how important good child care is to maintaining a productive workforce, some employers sponsor on-site child care centers or subsidize child care expenses as an employee benefit. Employers find that support for child care reduces absenteeism and turnover (National Child Care Information Center, n.d.).

In addition, the federal government provides child care assistance through **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**. The TANF program provides temporary financial aid but requires recipients to move into the labor force or schooling, further increasing the demand for child care. In addition, **Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG)** allocate funds to states for low-income working families to purchase their own child care.

Access to Early Childhood Education

Despite the overall increase in the number of children attending preschool, access to programs varies considerably depending on family income and other factors. In fact, the children who are most likely to benefit from high-quality programs are the least likely to participate in them. Consider the following statistics:

- Young children who live in poverty are less likely to attend preschool than children from higher income families. As illustrated in Figure 1.2, 89% of 4-year-olds whose families earn more than \$100,000 are enrolled in preschool, compared to 55% of those who earn \$20,000 to \$30,000 (Barnett & Yarosz, 2007).
- Head Start and state-funded prekindergarten programs increase the participation rates for low-income families, but only about 60% of income-eligible families have access to Head Start because insufficient slots are available (Barnett & Yarosz, 2007).
- Families with moderate incomes face the greatest hurdle because they are not eligible for subsidized programs and cannot afford private ones (NACCRRA, 2010).
- Preschool participation varies considerably depending on the mother's education. Almost 90% of children whose mothers have a college education participate in preschool, compared to only 55% of those whose mothers are high school dropouts (Barnett & Yarosz, 2007). Again, the children who need preschool the most—those whose mothers are less likely to provide educational experiences at home—are the least likely to get it.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Federally funded program, more commonly known as Welfare to Work, that provides temporary financial aid but requires recipients to move into the labor force or schooling.

Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG)

Federal funds allocated to states for low-income working families to purchase child care.

How Early Childhood Education Is Changing

Recently, two enormous transformations in the United States have had significant impacts on early childhood education—changing demographics and economics. The nation

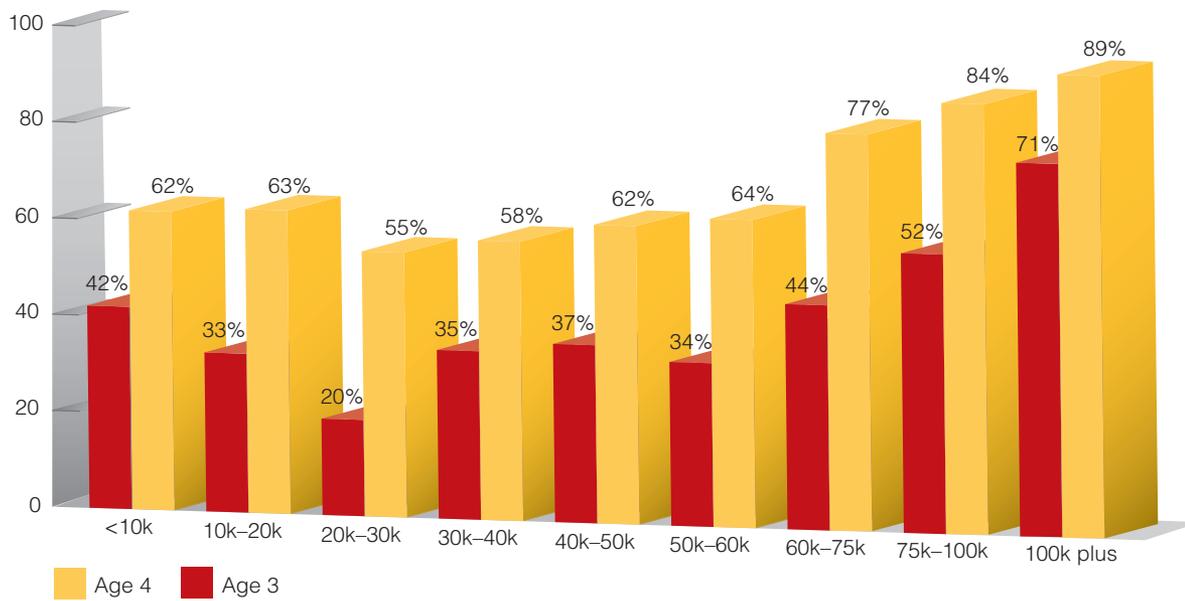


FIGURE 1.2 Preschool Participation by Income

is becoming increasingly diverse. At the same time, economic hardship and poverty—including homelessness—are affecting increasing numbers of families.

Changing Demographics

The 2010 U.S. census revealed that the population is highly diverse, both racially and culturally. Currently 25% of all children have parents who are immigrants. In the next 10 years, the majority of young children will be from groups currently identified as minorities (Children’s Defense Fund, 2011). In many school districts today, this is already the case (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011).

The largest increase is among individuals who identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino. Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population grew by 43%, accounting for over half of the total increase in the U.S. population (Ennis et al., 2011). Due to both higher birth rates and immigration, Hispanics now constitute one-fifth of the nation’s young children and are projected to be a quarter of all young children in the United States by 2030 (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & McLaughlin, 2008). Many of these children are **dual-language learners** because they are learning to speak two languages at the same time—their home language and English. These demographic shifts have important implications for early childhood educators as discussed in the *Language Lens: Preparing to Teach Dual Language Learners*.

Changing Economics

The recent economic crisis led to millions of children and families falling into poverty, with potentially devastating impacts on children’s health, development, and learning. More than 25% of all children under 6 live in poverty, but African American and Latino children are about three times as likely to be poor as White, non-Hispanic children (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2011; Children’s Defense Fund, 2011).

Increased unemployment also negatively affects enrollments in early childhood programs as families struggle to pay for child care (NACCRRA, 2010). In some situations, families remove their children from preschool or child care centers because they can no longer afford or do not need these services. Some employers are less willing or able to subsidize child care as a benefit. The long-term effects of the economic downturn on early childhood programs remain to be seen. However, increased funding for child care and

Dual language learners

Children who are learning to speak two languages at the same time—usually their home language and English.



Language Lens

Preparing to Teach Dual Language Learners

Eight different languages are spoken among the children in Natalia's kindergarten class. Natalia and two of the children are the only ones whose first language is English. Natalia works hard to create a caring community where all the children comfortably experiment with learning English. She also strives to communicate with the parents by using translators. Last year, Natalia's class also included eight languages—but some of them were different from those spoken this year.

The number of languages represented in Natalia's classroom may seem extreme, but linguistic and cultural diversity is now the norm in our nation's schools. In the next 20 years, the biggest single child-related demographic change is predicted to be an increase in dual language learners. Most of these children speak Spanish as a home language but many others speak Asian, Middle Eastern, and African languages. California, Florida, and Texas continue to have the largest percentages of Spanish-speaking families, but between 2000 and 2010 the Hispanic population grew in every region of the country, most significantly in the South and Midwest.

In the past, most teachers could safely assume that they would never encounter a language other than English in their entire careers. Today, Natalia's experience or something like it is not so very rare. New teachers may find it beneficial to learn another language themselves, but learning 8 languages is not a reasonable expectation. What can

new and experienced teachers like Natalia do? They can start by remembering some important principles about dual language learners:

- People who speak the same language, whether Spanish or another language, are not all alike—they come from a variety of countries and cultures.
- Learning two or more languages enhances brain development.
- Supporting home language development is essential because children can learn many skills in their home language and apply those skills as they learn English.
- Teachers need to intentionally teach English vocabulary and provide lots of opportunities for children to play together and practice their developing language skills.
- Communicating with families is essential regardless of the effort required.

The children of today must be prepared to function as citizens of a global society. Speaking two or more languages is an important skill for the 21st century. When children enter early childhood programs speaking a language other than English, the foundation is already there to build on.

Sources: Hispanic population: 2010. 2010 Census Briefs by S. R. Ennis, M. Ríos-Vargas, & N. G. Albert, 2011, U.S. Census Bureau, Retrieved from <http://2010census.gov/2010census/data>; Getting it right for young children from diverse backgrounds: Applying research to improve practice by L. M. Espinosa, 2010, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

early education at this difficult time in the nation's history is solid evidence of its broad support and the recognition of its value. Children growing up in poverty are especially in need of high quality early childhood experiences and good teachers.

▲ Why Become an Early Childhood Educator?

Choosing to teach young children, like every career decision, involves weighing many factors. Prospective teachers need to be familiar with what the work entails and the possible career options. Most important, they need to determine whether the demands and rewards of their chosen profession are a good match with their own strengths, dispositions, and personal goals (Colker, 2008).

The Joys of Teaching Young Children

Working with children demands patience and the willingness to care for and about other people's children, even or especially the least lovable of those children. Teaching young children is truly rewarding work, even when it is most challenging (Colker, 2008). Each day brings new discoveries, accomplishments, and joys for children and teachers.



Picture a 4-year-old child. What are the first thoughts that come to mind? Is he or she curious? Eager to learn? Excellent early childhood teachers take advantage of young children's deep desire to actively engage with and make sense of the world around them. Recall the sense of satisfaction you felt when you mastered a difficult task such as learning to read or ride a bike. Children, too, gain great pleasure from the sense of mastery that comes from learning something new or overcoming an obstacle.

Another word that comes to mind when thinking of children is *fun*. Yes, early childhood programs prepare children for success in school, but they also provide them with joyful learning experiences every day of their young lives. Children should have fun in child care centers and homes, preschools, and schools. They love to joke, tease, and be silly; to sing, move, and dance; to play by themselves and with friends; to know that adults care for them; to wonder about and explore the natural world; and to generally enjoy living. When teachers create a safe and supportive place for children to experience the unique joys of childhood, children will thrive—and their teachers will also.



Intentional teachers are purposeful, but they are also playful. How can teachers keep the fun in childhood while helping children achieve important learning goals?

Dimensions of Effective, Intentional Teaching

One overarching theme of this book is that effective early childhood practice requires teachers to be intentional in everything they do. **Intentional teachers** have a purpose for the decisions they make and can explain that purpose to others (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Epstein, 2007b). However, we believe that intentional teaching involves much more. Intentional teaching is a multifaceted, multidimensional concept that conveys many of the personal and professional qualities of an early childhood educator. Consider how well your own aspirations and dispositions fit with our description of the dimensions of intentional teaching that appears in Figure 1.3.

For an example of intentional teaching, read the *Becoming an Intentional Teacher: Being Purposeful and Playful* feature. Now that we have described both the dedication and the delight that teaching young children entails, we turn to an overview of the job opportunities in the field.

Career Options for Early Childhood Educators

As the field of early education grows, so do the potential career options and opportunities for early childhood professionals. At the same time, however, the field is experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers (Ludwig, Kirshstein, Sidana, Ardila-Rey, & Bae, 2010). Even as a large percentage of the current teaching staff is nearing retirement, teacher qualification requirements are being raised in many sectors of the field (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnus, 2009).

Because the early childhood field is so diverse and covers such a broad age range, early childhood educators have many possible career choices. Careers tend to fall into two categories:

- Working *with* children involves daily interaction and direct responsibility for children's care and education and includes positions such as classroom teacher or family child care provider.
- Working *for* children involves work that supports children's development and education, whether in proximity to the children, such as being a child care center director, or at a further distance, such as being a teacher-education professor.

▶ In this **video**, a preschool teacher describes the importance of developing curriculum. As you watch, note the many dimensions of intentional teaching she considers. Consider how her choices influence both her students' feelings about school and her own feelings about teaching.

intentional teachers

Teachers who have a purpose for the decisions they make and can explain that purpose to others.



- **Caring and committed.** They recognize that developing a personal, positive, warm relationship with each child is the foundation for everything they do. Their commitment to children means putting children's needs before their own and recognizing that teaching young children is less a job than a calling.
- **Enthusiastic and engaged.** They genuinely enjoy being with young children however messy or challenging they may be, and share in the excitement of their discoveries. They become energetically and intensely involved in children's activity, whether it means getting down on the floor to play and talk with a baby or thinking through the solution to a problem with a kindergartner.
- **Curious and creative.** They are eager to learn, just as children are. Young children want to learn all sorts of things that teachers themselves may not know—what's inside a bug, why the sky is blue, how an airplane flies. Intentional teachers model an inquisitive attitude. They want to find out along with children, and they approach questions or problems in new, imaginative ways.
- **Respectful and responsive.** They value and treat children, families, and colleagues with dignity and esteem. They respond thoughtfully to diversity in all of its forms: language, culture, race/ethnicity, ability/disability, age, gender, and sexual orientation. They are open and accepting of perspectives that are different from their own.
- **Passionate and patient.** They bring into their work their own emotions and deep interests, such as a passion for music, painting, or poetry; a preference for belly laughs or quiet smiles. At the same time, they recognize that children have their own intense feelings that can spill over into anger, frustration, or fits of tears. Intentional teachers respond calmly and thoughtfully, without becoming upset or annoyed themselves.
- **Purposeful and playful.** They have important goals for children—to help them make friends, regulate their emotions, control their bodies, learn to read and write—and they plan carefully to help children achieve their goals. But along the way, they joke and laugh with children, accept silliness, encourage and support play, and make learning itself playful. A sense of humor is a necessity.
- **Focused and flexible.** They are like cameras that can scan the entire classroom and then narrow their attention to meet one child's need or respond to her question or idea. They can be teaching a reading lesson with a specific goal in mind and switch gears when a child starts talking about his brother's illness.
- **Aware and accountable.** They are self-aware, they reflect on and evaluate their own performance, and they strive to improve. But their judgments are not made in isolation; they compare their performance to a standard of excellence. Intentional teachers are willing to be accountable; they accept responsibility for their actions.
- **Informed and effective.** They know how children develop and learn; they know how to teach and what to teach. They use research-based teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for children and help children make sense of the world around them. Intentional teachers also regularly check to see if what they are doing is actually working. Are children making progress toward developmentally appropriate goals?
- **Listening and learning.** They realize that the more they learn about children, the more they need to know. They understand that choosing to teach is choosing to be a lifelong learner. Intentional teachers learn from children every day; they listen to children, and they pay close attention to all of children's cues. They stay up to date about new knowledge and continue to grow as professionals.

FIGURE 1.3 Characteristics of Professional, Intentional Early Childhood Teachers

Over the course of their careers, many early childhood professionals move back and forth between these types of jobs. However, we believe that success in working *for* children is greater if an individual has actually worked *with* children. No one in the early childhood community can do his or her job well without knowing what life is like in an early childhood setting (Colker, 2008). This experience informs decisions at every level.



Becoming an Intentional Teacher

Being Purposeful and Playful

Here's What Happened It was the fifth straight day of rain facing my kindergarten children as they arrived at school on Friday. Some of them were already dragging their backpacks in apparent dread while others rambunctiously ran down the hallway as though they couldn't contain themselves another minute. The bell rang and the classroom door opened. The children stopped abruptly, almost stumbling over each other. Their eyes opened wide as if they thought elves had been at work overnight transforming the environment.

Laughing, I suggested they put away their things and come to the gathering area for morning meeting. We usually discuss the day's plans but today I gave some new directions. "Instead of our regular choice time in centers, we are going to divide into two groups and then switch group assignments later. Group 1 is going to use the obstacle courses we've set up here and in Mrs. D'Onofrio's room. Group 2 is going to go on a treasure hunt. Each group will have a map with clues in pictures and writing. You'll find answers to some of the clues in our classroom and some in hers. Her children will take turns switching rooms with us to look for clues. You'll divide up into teams to help each other find the treasure, but you'll want to be quiet deciphering your maps because you don't want to give away the clues to the other teams."

Here's What I Was Thinking Our kindergarten curriculum is packed with learning goals based on the state standards. I always keep those goals in mind and have a purpose for everything I plan each day. After five straight days of rain, my fellow kindergarten teacher and I knew that we would have to adjust our regular plans. No outdoor play time again

could only mean very distractible children whose attention spans would suffer greatly.

As kindergarten teachers, we know how much children need to play and how much their healthy development depends on it. That's why we thought of setting up the obstacle course. The course included a balance beam and narrow space to scoot through as well as objects to go over, around, and through. Each time children attempted the course, they were handed a different set of directions to not only use different muscles but also to learn to read and follow directions. The children repeated the course several times as they practiced their developing skills.

We had different purposes for the treasure hunt. We still wanted children to be physically active, moving around the room. But we made the clues difficult to figure out, requiring kindergarten-level literacy skills. Having the children work in teams meant they had to use language, employ problem-solving skills, and cooperate. They also had to self-regulate so as not to give away their plans to other teams and to solve the puzzle.

At the end of the day, we'd all forgotten about the rain. Some of the children said it was the most fun they had ever had at school. It took a lot of work, but being playful *and* purposeful meant that we were able to accomplish curriculum goals and have a lot of fun as teachers, too.

Reflection Feeling pressured to cover the curriculum, teachers may limit vitally important opportunities for children to play. What other ways do you think these teachers could have playfully but purposefully addressed their curriculum goals?

Working with Children

Early childhood teachers are usually the first to admit that they aren't in this profession for the money. It is the satisfaction they get from working with children that is deeply rewarding. For many of them, the fact that they make an impact on the life of every child they encounter is a powerful incentive and the reason that, once they enter the field, they are there to stay (Colker, 2008).

Early childhood teachers work with different age groups from infancy through primary grades in a wide range of settings. The qualifications and required certifications for specific jobs will vary, but a broad-based education in the field is necessary preparation. Following are some of the options and opportunities available for interesting and rewarding work:

- *Head Start* teachers can alter the life trajectory of young children and their families who are most in need. They help ensure that children from low-income families receive an excellent education and comprehensive health, nutrition, and other services.
- *Early Head Start* teachers intervene early with mothers and their babies to help set them on a course of healthy development.



- *Child care center* teachers provide loving care and education to children for extended periods of time each day, and help employed parents feel secure about their children's care so they can do their jobs. Careers in child care offer the option of teaching various age groups: infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children before and/or after school. Although teaching in child care pays less than does teaching in other settings, many teachers relish its flexible and creative environment. Conditions also vary by administrative agency; for example, an employer-sponsored child care center may offer more benefits and higher compensation than a community-based one.
- Teachers in *family child care homes* literally open their doors to small groups of children from infancy through school age, providing a home-like atmosphere of care and education. Family child care means being your own boss, but requires administering a small business as well as caring for children.
- *Preschools* vary a great deal—public, private, faith based, and so on—each with its own benefits that will appeal to different teachers' interests and match their goals. A public prekindergarten, for example, may provide better salaries, whereas a private one may be more flexible about curriculum and expectations for children.
- A teacher in a *parent cooperative preschool* has the opportunity to develop particularly close relationships with families but also needs the ability to work with parents as co-teachers, an acquired skill.
- Teachers in *public schools* have the option of teaching different age groups from kindergarten through primary grades. Schools are bureaucracies with regulations and an established curriculum and tests, but as professionals, teachers make hundreds of classroom decisions every day. Salaries and benefits in the public schools are the most secure of any sector in early childhood.
- *Early childhood special educators* and *early intervention specialists* are qualified individuals who work with children with special needs in various settings such as in school systems, Head Start, or child care. Inclusion of children with special needs means that early childhood special educators work closely with regular classroom teachers. In fact, in some states, the same teacher education program prepares teachers for certification in both fields simultaneously.
- *Mentor teacher* is an evolving career option for more experienced, outstanding professionals. It is helpful for new teachers to work with a mentor teacher to improve their skills or to get help for children with particular learning challenges. Mentor teachers are becoming more common in elementary schools, preschools, and child care programs.
- The need for *bilingual teachers* and those who are qualified to teach dual language learners is growing. As the population becomes ever more diverse, these qualifications will be useful in any early childhood setting.

Given the variety of careers available, early childhood teachers have many options. Even when an entire career is spent teaching the same age group in the same workplace, teachers will always encounter new challenges and new experiences. I once asked a former teacher who had taught for 40 years, “Didn’t you ever get tired of teaching first grade?” She looked stunned and replied, “Never, because every group was different.” Having been a child in her class at one time, I clearly understood what she meant—that every child is different and unique and that being a teacher never loses its fascination.

Working for Children

At some point in their careers, all early childhood professionals should work with children in order to understand, firsthand, how educators help shape our young children. However, there are many opportunities for early childhood educators to pursue positions working *for* children. With additional education, specialized training, and experience, a background in early childhood can lead to positions such as these:

- *Director* of a child care center or preschool, or school principal (with additional course work in administration)



- *Curriculum developer* for an individual school, network of schools, or publisher
- *Home visitor or family services worker* in Head Start, Early Head Start, or another community agency
- *Policy staff* at local/state/federal agencies, associations, and organizations
- *College faculty* teaching teachers and/or conducting research
- *Writer/producer of resources for children* such as children's book author, technology developer, children's museum staff, or media performer

In previous sections, we discussed what it means to be a professional, intentional early childhood teacher. These definitions reflect the profession's core values and beliefs, a topic to which we turn next.

The Culture of Early Childhood Education

A key theme of this book is the important role that culture plays in development and learning. Broadly defined, **culture** is the rules and expectations for behavior of members of a group that are passed on from one generation to the next. These rules determine to a large extent what group members regard as important and what values shape their actions and judgments.

Like other professional groups, the early childhood profession has its own culture. This culture is transmitted both explicitly and implicitly from more experienced, competent members to new initiates in three ways: through formal education, through on-the-job experiences, and through mentoring in either setting. New teachers may become confused or flustered when the cultural rules transmitted in one setting, such as their college classroom, do not seem to match the expectations for behavior in another, such as their first teaching assignment.

Cultural groups define themselves in many ways, including through the language they use, how they identify themselves, the values they share, and their fundamental beliefs. We discuss these topics in the following sections.

Shared Vocabulary

One aspect of early childhood culture is a shared vocabulary. Shared language facilitates communication and minimizes misunderstandings within groups. The profession gives particular meaning to terms like *developmentally appropriate*, *play*, *relationships*, *comprehensive services*, or *inclusion* (all of which are defined in this book). Their definitions are tailored to our profession and may not mirror how these words are used in other professions or everyday life.

An essential part of joining a profession is learning its language. For example, although the larger society uses the term *day care*, within the profession the accepted term is *child care*. We believe that saying *child care* is more respectful of children and a more accurate description of the setting and the job.

Shared Identity

Most professionals feel a sense of belonging to their group. They identify themselves as members of the profession, whether it is as a doctor, a lawyer, or an accountant. In early childhood education, it is often harder to “name” ourselves. The profession itself does not have an agreed-on name (Goffin & Washington, 2007). Among the names it is known by are *early care and education*, *child care*, *early education*, and *early development and learning*. In this book, we refer to the field as *early childhood education*. We prefer this term because it contains the word *child*, which is an ever-present reminder of the primary focus of our work. We also believe that the term encompasses the key elements of caring, development, and learning.

Another challenge to establishing a clear identity is what to call the role itself. Infant/toddler teachers and teachers in center-based care are often called *caregivers*. In family child care, adults are called *providers*. But we embrace the term *teacher* because it is the

culture The explicit and implicit values, beliefs, rules, and expectations for behavior of members of a group that are passed on from one generation to the next. These rules determine to a large extent what group members regard as important and what values shape their actions and judgments.



Early childhood educators are members of a profession that shares knowledge, values, and beliefs about children and their work. Meeting with more experienced teachers is one way of becoming a professional. Can you think of others?

broadest term, captures most of the job responsibilities, commands society's respect, and is after all what children usually call the adults who care for and educate them no matter what the setting.

Shared Values

The early childhood profession is committed to a core set of values that is deeply rooted in the history of the field. NAEYC (2011a) articulates these core values in its code of ethical conduct:

We have made a commitment to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture (including ethnicity), community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect.

I often take informal polls of teachers during speeches at education conferences. A question I always ask is: “What are your values as an early childhood educator?” Most of the core values just listed are mentioned. Yet there is one that is always stated emphatically and is usually first—“play!” Early childhood professionals strongly value play as essential for children's development and learning. Because play is so important in early childhood, we will revisit the topic throughout this book. Political and economic forces threaten these values at times, but they nevertheless endure.



Shared Beliefs

Although early childhood culture shares many beliefs, a few dominate:

- The strong belief in the potential of all children, regardless of their life circumstances and individual abilities or disabilities.
- The belief in the power of **developmentally appropriate practice** to produce positive results for children. Developmentally appropriate practice is teaching that engages children's interests and adapts for their age, experience, and ability to help them meet challenging and achievable goals.
- The belief that early childhood teachers are professionals who make informed decisions about what is developmentally appropriate for each child in each situation.
- The fundamental belief in the potential of our work to make a real and lasting difference in the world.

This is the final justification for joining the profession: the opportunity to make a contribution to children's lives. Many professions exist primarily to solve problems. Doctors and nurses treat illnesses. Firefighters put out fires and rescue people. Insurance agents help people recover from losses or catastrophes. The work of early childhood professionals, on the other hand, is to prevent problems from occurring. Our job is to set children on a positive course from the beginning. The proven effectiveness of early intervention when young children face difficulties creates room for optimism and hope.

▲ Early Childhood Program Quality and Effectiveness

Growing attention to early education primarily results from impressive research demonstrating its effectiveness in improving outcomes for children. All of the research that has influenced policy, however, finds that the key ingredient in the effectiveness of early childhood education is the quality of the program for children. But what is quality?

Setting Standards for Quality

Earlier in this chapter, we described different types of early childhood programs. Various kinds of programs must meet different sets of standards, which are intended to determine the program's quality. Early childhood educators have been instrumental in setting standards for quality that, in addition to research, reflect the profession's core values and beliefs.

Child Care Licensing Standards

Child care centers and, in some states, family child care homes, are regulated by each state's **child care licensing standards**. These set minimum requirements for a program to operate legally. Such standards usually establish a minimum number of teachers required per child (teacher/child ratios), teacher qualifications, and health and safety requirements.

These standards, designed to ensure children's protection, vary considerably from state to state. For example, one state requires a teacher for every four infants, whereas another permits a ratio of one to six. The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (2011) concludes that state licensing standards and monitoring of centers' compliance fall short of providing basic protection for children's health and safety and promoting their development.

Because licensing standards vary and represent minimums, the quality of child care also varies considerably. Some licensed programs exceed the required standards, whereas others barely meet them (NACCRRA, 2011). To address this issue and help parents make informed decisions, many states now operate **quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS)**, also called *quality rating systems* (QRS). These systems rate program quality

 This **video** addresses the characteristics of high quality programs for children. As you watch, consider the environment and activities that you expect to find in all quality child care centers.

developmentally appropriate practice Ways of teaching that engage children's interests and adapt for their age, experience, and ability, to help them meet challenging and achievable learning goals.

child care licensing standards Minimum requirements, legally established by each state, for a child care program to operate.

quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) State-operated systems that evaluate and rate the quality of child care programs according to achievement of benchmarks beyond those required for minimal licensing, such as having more highly qualified teachers or better ratios.



according to achievement of benchmarks beyond those required for minimal licensing, such as having more highly qualified teachers or better ratios. The state may recognize centers that meet higher standards with more stars and pay higher reimbursement rates for children served. In some states, achieving accreditation is the highest level.

Accreditation Standards

The early childhood profession under the leadership of NAEYC (2007) is committed to raising the overall quality of early education for all children. Toward this end, the association sets high-quality standards and administers a voluntary **accreditation system** for all types of early childhood centers and schools serving children from birth through kindergarten. The standards that programs must achieve to obtain accreditation are listed in Table 1.1. These standards apply to any early childhood program regardless of length of day or sponsorship. NAEYC accreditation standards are designed to answer the question “What is high quality?”

To understand what we mean by *quality*, it is important to see the relationships among the standards rather than to see them as a discrete list. In the accreditation system,

accreditation system
NAEYC’s voluntary system for identifying high-quality early childhood centers and schools serving children from birth through kindergarten.

TABLE 1.1 NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards

Standard	Standard Description
1. Relationships	The program promotes positive relationships among all children and adults to encourage each child’s sense of individual worth and belonging as a part of a community and to foster each child’s ability to contribute as a responsible community member.
2. Curriculum	The program implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children and promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive.
3. Teaching	The program uses developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches that enhance each child’s learning and development in the context of the program’s curriculum goals. Teachers purposefully use multiple instructional approaches to optimize children’s opportunities for learning.
4. Assessment of children’s progress	The program is informed by ongoing systematic, formal, and informal assessment approaches to provide information on children’s learning and development. These assessments occur within the context of reciprocal communications with families and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children develop. Assessment results are used to benefit children by informing sound decisions about children, teaching, and program improvement.
5. Health	The program promotes the nutrition and health of children and protects children and staff from illness and injury.
6. Teachers	The program employs and supports a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children’s learning and development and to support families’ diverse needs and interests.
7. Families	The program establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child’s family to foster children’s development in all settings. These relationships are sensitive to family composition, language, and culture.
8. Community relationships	The program establishes relationships with and uses the resources of the children’s communities to support the achievement of program goals.
9. Physical environment	The program has a safe and healthful environment that provides appropriate and well-maintained indoor and outdoor physical environments. The environment includes facilities, equipment, and materials to facilitate child and staff learning and development.
10. Leadership and management	The program effectively implements policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program management so all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

Source: From “NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria: The Mark of Quality in Early Childhood Education,” 2007, Washington, DC: NAEYC.



the primary focus is on *children* as described in the first five standards: relationships, curriculum, teaching, assessment of children's progress, and health. The other five standards address teachers, partnerships with families and communities, and administration, including the physical environment and leadership and management. Meeting these standards establishes a supportive context that makes it possible to achieve and maintain the quality of life for children described in the first five standards.

Head Start Standards

Quality is also a critically important issue in Head Start, particularly so because it serves the nation's most vulnerable children. Head Start programs are regularly monitored for compliance with the national **Head Start Program Performance Standards** (Head Start, 2006). These standards are similar to accreditation standards, but they also address the comprehensive services that are part of Head Start's mandate.

Military Child Care Act

The largest employer-sponsored child care system in the world is the U.S. military. Its voluntary workforce of men and women depends on the provision of high-quality child care. In 1989, Congress passed the Military Child Care Act to ensure consistently high standards of quality in these programs. The act required that centers seek NAEYC accreditation, and also included provisions for teacher training and a career ladder tying compensation to increased professional development. The Military Child Care Act resulted in significantly improved quality and learning outcomes for children (Zellman & Johansen, 1998). In addition, the military child care system is now seen as a model for all employer-sponsored child care (N. D. Campbell, Appelbaum, Martinson, & Martin, 2000).

Measuring Quality in Early Childhood Programs

The early childhood field defines quality as having two dimensions: structural and process (FPG Child Development Institute, 2008). **Structural quality** includes features such as maximum group sizes, teacher/child ratios, and teacher qualifications, which are relatively easy to quantify and measure. **Process quality**, on the other hand, refers to the quality of the relationships and interactions among teachers and children, and the appropriateness of the materials, learning experiences, and teaching strategies. These features are more difficult to evaluate, and yet they are the key aspects of the quality of children's experiences. They describe what life should be like for children in a program, how they should be treated, and how their learning and development should be promoted.

Structural quality and process quality are interconnected. For example, well-qualified teachers are needed to plan and implement an engaging curriculum and teach effectively. Similarly, positive relationships between teachers and children are more likely to be established when the size of the group and ratio of adults to children is relatively small. An age-appropriate, well-equipped, and organized environment is needed to protect children's health and safety and to promote active learning.

The most difficult challenge is determining how to measure compliance with quality standards. To see if a program is meeting requirements, it is relatively easy to examine transcripts of teachers or count the number of children in a group. But it is much harder—especially for an outside evaluator—to decide if teachers have positive relationships with each child and family or if they are using effective teaching strategies. These standards can be assessed only by directly observing what goes on in classrooms (FPG Child Development Institute, 2008; NAEYC, 2008d).

To provide consistent ways of measuring quality, researchers have developed observation tools. One widely used observational measure is the **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)** for preschools and primary grades (Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008). The CLASS focuses on the quality of teachers' relationships with children and the

Head Start Program Performance Standards National standards that establish the level of quality of services provided by every Head Start program.

structural quality Features of an early childhood program, such as maximum group sizes, teacher/child ratios, and teacher qualifications, that are relatively easy to quantify and measure.

process quality The quality of the relationships and interactions among teachers and children, and the appropriateness of the materials, learning experiences, and teaching strategies occurring in an early childhood program.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Preschool and elementary classroom observational instrument that assesses the quality of teachers' relationships and interactions with children and the instructional strategies used to support children's learning.



instructional strategies they use to support children's learning. Research shows that how well classrooms and teachers score on these measures predicts how well children score on measures of language, literacy, mathematics, and social-emotional abilities (Early et al., 2005; Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009). The CLASS has been adopted as a tool for monitoring quality in Head Start. Another widely used program quality assessment is the **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R)** (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005) with versions for preschool, infant/toddler, family child care, and school-age programs. Both CLASS and ECERS-R are used by several state QRIS systems.

The overall conclusion of all of the research on the effectiveness of early education is that what teachers actually do with children is the most important determinant of the quality of children's experiences and their learning outcomes (Pianta et al., 2009). After decades of research on quality in early childhood programs, one thing we know for certain is that teachers matter. If children are to reach their full potentials, then professionals must also reach theirs.

Measuring Effectiveness

As we have seen, program quality is usually defined and measured in terms of “inputs”—the environments children experience and their interactions with teachers. However, program effectiveness is usually defined in terms of “outcomes”—the effects of these experiences on children's development and learning. As a result, effectiveness is measured against specific, usually age- or grade-related goals. For preschoolers, the most common source of outcome goals are state **early learning standards**, which describe what children should know and be able to do before entering kindergarten (Scott-Little, 2011). All 50 states have such guidelines for preschool children, and 30 states have such goals for infants and toddlers (Scott-Little, 2011).

Head Start has established its own set of comprehensive goals for children—the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. Head Start programs are required by law to periodically assess children's progress toward the framework's goals.

State departments of education establish outcome standards for children in kindergarten and primary grades. Children's progress toward these goals is often measured by state-wide testing programs usually beginning at third grade, as we discuss later in this chapter.

▲ The Positive Effects of Early Childhood Education

We began this chapter by citing ways that early childhood is a field on the rise. The positive attention and support the field has garnered is to a large extent the result of an impressive body of research on the importance of the early years and the lasting benefits of early childhood programs.

Brain Research

Among the most exciting achievements in developmental psychology in the past century were new insights into how the brain grows and functions during the earliest years of life. Brain research, which had previously been confined to laboratories, is now reported regularly in popular newspapers and magazines. Technologies such as positron emission tomography (PET) scans and functional magnetic resonance imagery (fMRI) reveal the inner workings of babies' brains to policy makers, educators, and the public.

Major conclusions from brain research have significantly lifted the profile of early childhood education—and especially the importance of experiences in the first three years of life (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007a; R. A. Thompson, 2008):

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R)

Observational instrument used to rate program quality on a 7-point scale from inadequate to excellent.

early learning standards

Describe what children should know and be able to do before entering kindergarten.



1. Positive experiences in the early years—especially warm, responsive, caring, conversational relationships—literally grow babies' brains and lay the foundation for later learning.
2. Negative experiences such as prolonged stress, physical or sexual abuse, or exposure to violence can have dire and long-lasting effects on brain capabilities.
3. Early intervention including intensive early education and comprehensive support services for families—the earlier and more intensive, the better—can ameliorate the negative effects.



Dramatic evidence, along with powerful visual images of brain scans, has raised awareness of the vital importance of early experiences. For example, a group of researchers in Pittsburgh examined brain scans of maltreated children. They found striking evidence of smaller brain volumes, with more negative effects the earlier the abuse began and the longer it lasted (De Bellis et al., 1999). Findings such as these demonstrate the critical importance of early intervention.

Brain research demonstrates the importance of early childhood education, especially for infants and toddlers.

Lasting Benefits of Early Childhood Education

A large body of research demonstrates that high-quality early childhood programs can have long-lasting positive consequences for children, especially children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and can be cost effective (Burger, 2010; Pianta et al., 2009). Three well-designed longitudinal studies—the Perry Preschool Project, the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project, and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers—followed children from early childhood into adulthood. The findings of these studies have been singularly influential with policy makers.

The Perry Preschool Project

The Perry Preschool Project, which began in the early 1960s in Ypsilanti, Michigan, was one of the first studies to demonstrate the lasting effects of a high-quality preschool program on educational and economic outcomes. (Perry Preschool later became the HighScope Educational Research Foundation.) Researchers found that Perry Preschool graduates were less likely to be assigned to special education or be retained in grade and had better achievement test scores than children who did not attend preschool (Berrueta-Clement, Schweinhart, Barnett, Epstein, & Weikart, 1984). Preschool participation was also related to less involvement in delinquency and crime and a higher rate of high school graduation (Schweinhart, Barnes, & Weikart, 1993). At age 40, program participants were significantly more likely to have higher levels of education, be employed, earn higher wages, and own their own homes; they were less likely to be welfare dependent and had fewer arrests (Schweinhart et al., 2005).

These outcomes benefited not only the participants but the larger society as well. Economists estimated that for every dollar spent on the program, as much as \$17 was returned on the original investment (Schweinhart et al., 2005). This means that Americans saved money in terms of the decreased costs of crime, special education, grade retention, and welfare payments, as well as increased taxes paid by those children who achieve in school and later earn higher incomes.

The Abecedarian Project

The University of North Carolina's Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project demonstrated that intensive early intervention (five years of full-day, high-quality child care with parent involvement) can greatly enhance the development of children whose mothers have low income and education levels (F. A. Campbell et al., 2008). The Abecedarian program produced positive effects on achievement in reading and mathematics throughout elementary and high school. Children who participated were significantly less likely to be retained in grade or placed in special education, and they were more likely



to attend 4-year colleges and to have skilled jobs. Access to free child care improved the mothers' long-term employment opportunities and earnings.

Chicago Child-Parent Centers

Perry Preschool and Abecedarian were relatively small-scale demonstration programs. A third longitudinal study of the Title I federally funded Chicago Child-Parent Centers reached similar positive conclusions with a large-scale, public school program involving more than 1,500 children (Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, White, & Ou, 2011). Since 1985, the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC) have provided preschool and kindergarten for children from low-income families and family support services with continued intervention in early elementary school.

Children who participated in CPC demonstrated higher school achievement, better social adjustment, less frequent grade retention, lower dropout rates, and lower rates of juvenile arrest. A follow-up study conducted 25 years later found strong positive effects into adulthood (Reynolds et al., 2011). Children who attended the program at age 3 attained better levels of education, income, job skills, and health insurance coverage, and lower rates of substance abuse, arrest, and imprisonment.

The Positive Effects of Prekindergarten, Head Start, and Child Care

As publicly funded prekindergarten programs have expanded, a great deal of research evaluating their effectiveness has become available. Numerous states across the country have found positive effects on children's readiness for school (Camilli, Vargas, Ryan, & Barnett, 2010; Pianta & Howes, 2009). For example, a longitudinal study of Michigan's prekindergarten program found that it decreased grade repetition and increased the number of children who passed the state's reading and mathematics tests and graduated from high school on time, and all these differences were greatest for children of color (Schweinhart, Xiang, Daniel-Echols, Browning, & Wakabayashi, 2012).

Some of the strongest, most positive results were found in an evaluation of Tennessee's statewide prekindergarten program (Lipsey, Farran, Hofer, Bilbrey, & Dong, 2011). Children who attended prekindergarten improved on measures of literacy, language, and math between 37% and 176% more than did children who did not attend. The greatest gains were in language, which is very difficult to improve. Most research demonstrates the value of preschool for children from low income families, but a growing body of research provides evidence of the positive effects of early education for *all* children. Read the *What Works: Increasing School Readiness for All Children* feature for an example.

Perhaps no other federally funded project has been as thoroughly studied as Head Start over the nearly 50 years of its existence. An overall conclusion that can be drawn is that Head Start has positive effects on children's overall development, health and dental care, and preparation for school, including improved literacy skills and social-emotional development (Barnett, 2008; Puma et al., 2005). Although there is evidence that Head Start needs to be improved and participation does not close the achievement gap between poor and middle-class children, it does narrow the gap, especially for children who enter the program at age 3 (Tarullo, Aikens, Moiduddin, & West, 2010; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010).

Child care research consistently finds that children who participate in high-quality programs demonstrate better language and mathematics ability and fewer behavior problems than do children in poor-quality care (Cost, Quality, and Child Care Outcomes Study Team, 1995; NICHHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2002; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 1999). Positive effects are evident for all groups of children but are greater for children from lower-income families.

We could cite many other studies from states as diverse as New Jersey, Louisiana, Maryland, New Mexico, and South Carolina that prove that high-quality early childhood programs can have positive short- and long-term consequences for young children. Research



What Works

Increasing School Readiness for All Children

As policy makers consider whether to increase funding for Head Start, public prekindergarten, or child care for needy families, they want to know whether these programs are effective. They want to know, “How well do early childhood programs prepare children for school?” and “Who should be eligible to attend?” A big issue is whether programs should be universal—that is, available to families of all income levels who choose to enroll their children—or targeted to low income families as Head Start is.

Oklahoma’s state-funded prekindergarten has generated considerable attention. It is universal, based in the school system, and reaches a higher percentage of 4-year-olds than any other state pre-K program. Although most classes are located in public schools, some classes are located in Head Start and child care programs that meet the same standards for quality.

The Oklahoma program has high standards compared to other states, with lead teachers required to have a B.A. degree and be certified in early childhood education. Notably, prekindergarten teachers earn the same wages and benefits as other public school teachers. Student–teacher ratios are 10 to 1 and class sizes are limited to 20.

An evaluation of the program involving more than 3,000 children found strong positive effects for children from all income

groups. All children’s language and cognitive test scores improved, regardless of their economic status or ethnicity. The largest gains were for poor children of color, with Hispanic children making the most learning progress, followed by African Americans. But even though gains were somewhat higher for low-income children, gains for children in the higher income group were almost as large. A similar study comparing Tulsa’s (Oklahoma) pre-K program and the Tulsa County Head Start program (which also receives state funds) found that both programs produce substantial improvements in early literacy and math skills.

It is increasingly clear that children from low-income families are not the only ones who need and can benefit from attending preschool. Research shows that many middle-income children are also behind their peers from the highest-earning families at kindergarten entry and they are less likely to have access to the kind of high-quality programs provided in Oklahoma.

*Sources: The Effects of Oklahoma’s Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program on Hispanic Children, by W. T. Gormley, 2008, Washington, DC: Center for Research on Children in the U.S. (CROCUS), Georgetown University, retrieved July 28, 2009, from <http://www.crocus.georgetown.edu>; “The promise of preschool: Why we need early education for all” by W. S. Barnett & E. Frede, 2010, *American Educator*, 34(1), 21–29, 40.*

is also powerfully connected to another reason early childhood education is a field on the rise—the country’s need to close the achievement gap, as addressed in the next section.

Social Justice and Closing the Achievement Gap

One of our nation’s greatest challenges is addressing the persistent gap that exists between the school achievement of African American and Latino children and their white peers (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010; Hemphill & Vanneman, 2011). The causes for these differences are widely debated, but scholars tend to agree that they result primarily from the fact that race and ethnicity are strongly associated with **socioeconomic status (SES)** in the United States (Neuman, 2008). For example, 42% of African American children and 35% of Latino children under the age of 5 are in the lowest socioeconomic level of U.S. citizens compared with 15% of white non-Hispanic children (Children’s Defense Fund, 2011). And children of color are much more likely to live in conditions of extreme poverty (Children’s Defense Fund, 2011).

As we have seen, the number of young children growing up poor in our country is increasing, with the largest growth in poverty among children under age 5 and children of color, which could further widen the achievement gap in the future. The achievement gap has profound consequences for our nation’s future and its ability to compete in a global, highly technological society (Mullis, Martin, & Foy, 2008). Moreover, the potentially devastating effects on the life trajectories of individuals cannot be ignored.

Where the Gap Begins

Differences in children’s cognitive abilities are substantial right from “the starting gate” (Lee & Burkam, 2002). At age 4, children who live below the poverty line are 18 months below what is considered normal for their age group. Average math achievement is 21%

socioeconomic status (SES) Family income level.



lower for African American children than for white children and 19% lower for Hispanic children (Aud et al., 2010). Inequity in socioeconomic status is the most important predictor of children's cognitive skills (Aud et al., 2010; McLoyd & Purtell, 2008).

To describe this discrepancy, a more accurate term than achievement gap is really *knowledge gap*. The differences in achievement are likely the result of differences in children's opportunities to gain knowledge from a variety of learning experiences.

Schools' Contributions to the Gap

Children from low-income families not only enter kindergarten with fewer cognitive skills than their more affluent peers but also are more likely to encounter poorer-quality elementary schools (Neuman, 2008). These schools are likely to have fewer resources and qualified teachers, more negative teacher attitudes, and poorer neighborhood or school conditions. As a result, the inequalities in cognitive abilities that are present even before kindergarten entry are not eliminated and often are magnified by their elementary school experience (Parkinson & Rowen, 2008).

Children who begin school behind tend to stay behind. By fourth grade, fewer than one-third of American children read at or above grade level (Rampey, Dion, & Donahue, 2009). Reading achievement at the end of first grade predicts reading skill at the end of fourth grade (Hernandez, 2011), which subsequently predicts high school graduation. Moreover, deep-seated inequities in communities and schools tend to increase rather than diminish these early achievement gaps over time. As one child advocacy group states, "Our children are not failing to learn. Our schools are failing to teach them effectively" (Foundation for Child Development, 2008, p. 4).

Early Education and Social Justice

As we saw from research cited previously, these initial inequalities can be reduced. Children from low-income families who attend high-quality early childhood programs begin kindergarten with higher achievement, thus providing the potential to narrow the gap at the outset. This research, as well as studies on the effectiveness of services for children with special needs, proves that early intervention is less costly, more effective, and more humane than later remediation (Reynolds et al., 2011). Children living in poverty, however, are less likely to have access to high-quality programs. Read the *How Would You Respond? Increasing Public Support for Early Childhood Education* feature and consider other strategies to address this problem.

Improving quality and increasing access to early childhood programs are important strategies for enhancing social justice in America and improving learning outcomes for all children. These goals can be addressed, however, only in the context of current trends in the field and the nation, which we discuss next.

▲ Current Trends in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education is literally a field in transition. Major trends affecting the field include the universal prekindergarten movement, more focus on standards and accountability of programs and schools, calls for greater alignment among settings across the full early childhood age span, increased teacher qualifications, and advances in technology. These changes present new challenges, but also opportunities. In the sections that follow, we describe the potential benefits as well as the controversies of each trend. Even a cursory look at these trends reveals that they are interconnected.

Universal Prekindergarten Movement

The early years of the 21st century have seen enormous growth in funding and public support for universal, voluntary prekindergarten for 4-year-olds and even 3-year-olds in some



How Would You Respond...



... to Increasing Public Support for Early Childhood Education?

The Situation Early childhood education has become a political priority in the United States, and public funding has increased considerably over the last few decades. However, in difficult economic times with federal and state government deficits, maintaining funding is challenging, and painful decisions often must be made about how to use it most effectively.

What to Do? Of the following potential uses of funds for early childhood education, which ones do you think have the best chance of producing positive, lasting results for children? Why do you think they are productive ways to use public dollars?

- Make Early Head Start programs available in more communities.

- Expand the number of children served by Head Start.
- Provide professional development for teachers in child care centers, Head Start, and primary schools who do not have early childhood specialized degrees.
- Target funds to efforts that improve third grade test scores and close the achievement gap.
- Help states and school districts increase early childhood teacher compensation.
- Provide grants for increased early childhood special education services.
- Forgive college loans for early childhood education majors who agree to teach in low-income communities.

Are there other funding options that you think would be more productive than these?

places, as we discussed earlier (Barnett, 2010; Barnett & Frede, 2010). This trend has contributed to the field's growth; today the number of 4-year-olds in state pre-K programs exceeds the number enrolled in Head Start (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011a).

Universal prekindergarten is not without controversy, however. Proponents cite research showing that middle-class children benefit from prekindergarten although the cost of high-quality programs is out of reach for most of these families (Barnett, 2010; Burger, 2010). There is also evidence that academic and social skills of children from low-income families improve when they participate in mixed-income programs (Barnett & Frede, 2010; Schechter & Bye, 2007). In contrast, critics believe that limited funds should go to the neediest families (Fuller, 2007). Another concern is the competing need to fund services for infants and toddlers.

The prekindergarten movement has contributed to another trend: greater involvement of public schools in preschool education. In the past, young children rarely encountered a public school before kindergarten, but now the public education system is a major player in the early childhood landscape. As a result, issues that have dominated K–12 education for some time now affect programs for younger children, such as more focus on standards and accountability.

Standards and Accountability

Since the 1990s, educational systems in the United States have emphasized learning standards—what children should know and be able to do at various ages. At the same time, a strong emphasis on **accountability** has emerged. The concept is that schools and teachers, which are recipients of public dollars, need to be held accountable for children's achieving learning standards. This leads to two related issues: (1) What are teachers to be held accountable for? and (2) How will it be measured?

Elementary and secondary education is primarily controlled and funded by state governments, which means that learning standards vary widely, with some states setting standards lower than others. The federal government provides support to states through the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**. This law is periodically rewritten and therefore its requirements and funding are influenced by prevailing political trends. Since the 1990s, Congress has used the law as a lever to hold public schools accountable for eliminating the persistent gaps in achievement between different groups of children. Accountability is most often measured by test scores in core academic programs (reading and mathematics).

 In this **video**, Sue Bredekamp discusses her experience with NAEYC in helping to develop standards for teachers. Is her view of the importance of standards similar to yours?

accountability The process of holding teachers, schools, or programs responsible for meeting a required level of performance.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Law governing how the federal government distributes education funds to states and holds public schools accountable for the use of funding.



The law has also addressed the need for more highly qualified teachers to implement effective, **scientifically based instructional practices**, ways of teaching that research has demonstrated to improve learning outcomes. Emphasis on standards and accountability in elementary school has led a stronger emphasis on early literacy and mathematics in Head Start and prekindergarten.

A recent approach to improving accountability and school reform is the Obama administration's Race to the Top initiative. In it, states compete for funding to adopt high standards that will prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and compete in the global economy, ensure highly qualified teachers and principals, and turn around failing schools.

Future reauthorizations of ESEA are more likely to address preschool issues than in the past. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education added \$500 million to Race to the Top for Early Learning Challenge grants designed to enhance the quality of early education programs and increase access, especially for young children at risk for school failure.

One problem with a large-scale accountability movement is the great variability among state content standards. To address this issue, in 2010, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governor's Association (NGA) released the **Common Core Standards**, which are designed to establish a set of rigorous national standards in English language arts and mathematics for kindergarten through grade 12. The Common Core is intended to provide a consistent, clear understanding of what all students are expected to learn to be successful in college and careers, and for America to compete successfully in the global economy. As of 2011, 46 states and the District of Columbia had officially adopted the Common Core, requiring much additional work to align curriculum, teaching practices, and assessments to the new standards.

Although the goals of increasing accountability and equity are worthy, the methods that have been used are highly controversial (Neill, 2009). Some standards are actually unachievable for most children to meet even when they are in excellent schools (Graue, 2009). Critics believe that overemphasis on standardized test scores narrows the curriculum to what is tested, does not truly measure all of children's important capabilities, and punishes schools that need the most help (Moon, Callahan, & Tomlinson, 2003). Regardless of the requirements of any specific piece of state or federal legislation, accountability is unlikely to go away in the future.

scientifically-based instructional practices

Curriculum and instructional practices that research has demonstrated improve learning outcomes.

common core standards

Rigorous national standards in English language arts and mathematics for kindergarten through grade 12 developed by the Council of Chief State Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governor's Association (NGA).



Current trends in early childhood education include more focus on standards and accountability from prekindergarten through third grade. The overarching goal is to help children become more successful readers and writers.



Alignment of Preschool and K–3

A trend that is related to accountability and increased involvement of public schools in early education is the call for better alignment of preschool with K–3 (Shore, 2009). Traditionally, preschool and K–3 have been two separate worlds with very little communication between them. **Alignment** means that curriculum at the preschool level would lay a foundation for the kindergarten curriculum, which could then more easily build on what children have learned. The idea is to ease transitions for students between schools and school levels and enhance continuity of learning while also respecting the needs of young children (Shore, 2009; Takanishi & Kauerz, 2008).

Many early childhood educators are concerned that the push for alignment will narrow the curriculum to literacy and mathematics, apply learning standards intended for older children, and lead to inappropriate testing of young children (Graue, 2009; NAEYC, 2009). They are especially concerned that schools will eliminate valuable experiences such as play, the arts, and support for social-emotional development.

Advocates for PreK–3 alignment support better connected education for preschool and elementary children. They stress that alignment does not mean that preschool children should learn primary grade skills at an earlier age (NAEYC, 2009; Takanishi & Kauerz, 2008). Rather, curriculum should reflect what children can and should learn at each age, and teachers should know how to help children make progress.

Higher Teacher Qualifications

Another related trend is to raise preschool teacher qualifications, with an emphasis on college degrees in early childhood education or child development (Hyson, Horm, & Winton, 2012; Whitebook & Ryan, 2011). Several research reviews have concluded that having bachelor's degree-level teachers with specialized preparation in early childhood education leads to better outcomes for young children (Barnett, 2003; Whitebook et al., 2009). Although some research has not found clear benefits of degrees (Early et al., 2006; LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007), overall, studies tend to support the fact that the more specialized education teachers have, the better it is for the children they teach.

Head Start's teacher qualifications have incrementally been raised over the years. For many years, teachers were required to have only a **Child Development Associate (CDA) credential**. This competency-based credential requires 120 clock hours of training (which may or may not be credit bearing) and 480 hours of experience with children, plus passing a written test and being observed working effectively with young children. The Head Start Act of 2009 requires that by 2013, 50% of teachers hold a bachelor's degree with early childhood specialization, a significant increase in qualifications. Similarly, at least 50% of teacher assistants are required to have at least a CDA credential or be enrolled in a degree program. In addition, the CDA credential is the required qualification for teachers in Early Head Start.

Raising teacher qualifications has the potential to improve quality for children and also compensation and status for teachers. The biggest challenge will be providing adequate funding to increase compensation commensurate with teacher qualifications (Whitebook et al., 2009).

An additional concern is the need to maintain a diverse workforce that reflects the population of children served. State prekindergarten programs have a much larger percentage of teachers with bachelor's degrees (73%) than do Head Start (38%) or center-based programs (30%) (Kagan et al., 2008). However, Head Start teachers are much more likely to reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community (CLASP, 2011).

Advances in Technology

In no aspect of life is the speed of change as rapid as in the area of technology. In education, technology has a tremendous impact on how teachers teach and function in their

alignment Coordination of the curriculum from one level of education to the next in order to build on what children have already learned and to ease transitions for students between schools and school levels.

Child Development Associate (CDA) credential National competency-based credential for entry-level early childhood educators.



work, but also on children's experiences at home and in school. Although early childhood educators have been relatively slow to embrace technology, especially for children, the trend is toward increasingly innovative uses of interactive media in all aspects of early education. Given the demand for highly qualified teachers, online teacher preparation and professional development options are increasing rapidly.

As digital media such as handheld mobile devices and video games proliferate, so has the development of educational applications, the majority of which are targeted to preschoolers (Shuler, 2009; Thai, Lowenstein, Ching, & Rejeski, 2009). In their position statement on technology, NAEYC and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media (2012) acknowledge legitimate concerns about potential inappropriate uses of technology. However, they contend that "technology and interactive media are tools that can promote effective learning and development when they are used intentionally by early childhood educators, within the framework of developmentally appropriate practice, to support learning goals established for individual children" (p. 5).

Continuity and Change

One overarching trend always affecting education is continuity and change. As the field expands and changes occur in response to new political and economic realities, many long-time early childhood professionals are concerned that the fundamental values of the field will be lost (Bredenkamp, 2008a; NAEYC, 2009). Development, including development of professions, is characterized by both continuity and change. In this book we describe how the fundamental values of early childhood education can be retained and enhanced (thus maintaining continuity with the important tenets of the past), while also presenting what is known from new research about effective teaching practices for *all* children. Some ways of thinking and practicing should be cherished and held onto, whereas others may need to be updated or abandoned.

Resolving Contradictions Between Enduring Values and Current Trends

We propose that the way to resolve potential contradictions that arise over difficult or controversial issues is to "widen the lens." Widening the lens is a metaphor for expanding the sources of information professionals use to make decisions; gaining insights from diverse perspectives including through the lenses of culture, language, and ability/disability; and looking at questions or problems from broader perspectives. Widening the lens is a strategy to move beyond the tendency to oversimplify complex educational issues into "either/or" choices and to move toward "both/and" thinking.

Embracing *Both/And* Thinking

Widening the lens to consider diverse points of view—*both/and* thinking—is a constructive response to addressing both continuity and change in the field. Figure 1.4 illustrates how this process applies to the field today. The left side of the arrow describes traditional practices that have held sway in the past; the right side of the arrow illustrates how current views encompass these earlier approaches and extend beyond them, thus reflecting *both/and* thinking as well as continuity and change.

Throughout this text, we will revisit these issues as well as the profession's core values and demonstrate how new research can help teachers effectively put these values into practice. Chapters are devoted to each of the core values: child development and learning, relationships, families, communities, individuality, and cultural diversity. We discuss the overarching value of play in the context of all the key topics in this book.

We began by pointing out that early childhood education is a field on the rise. The profession is expanding, growing in status, and gaining support from policy makers and the general public. A huge body of research supports the importance of the work. It is indeed an exciting time to be an early childhood educator.

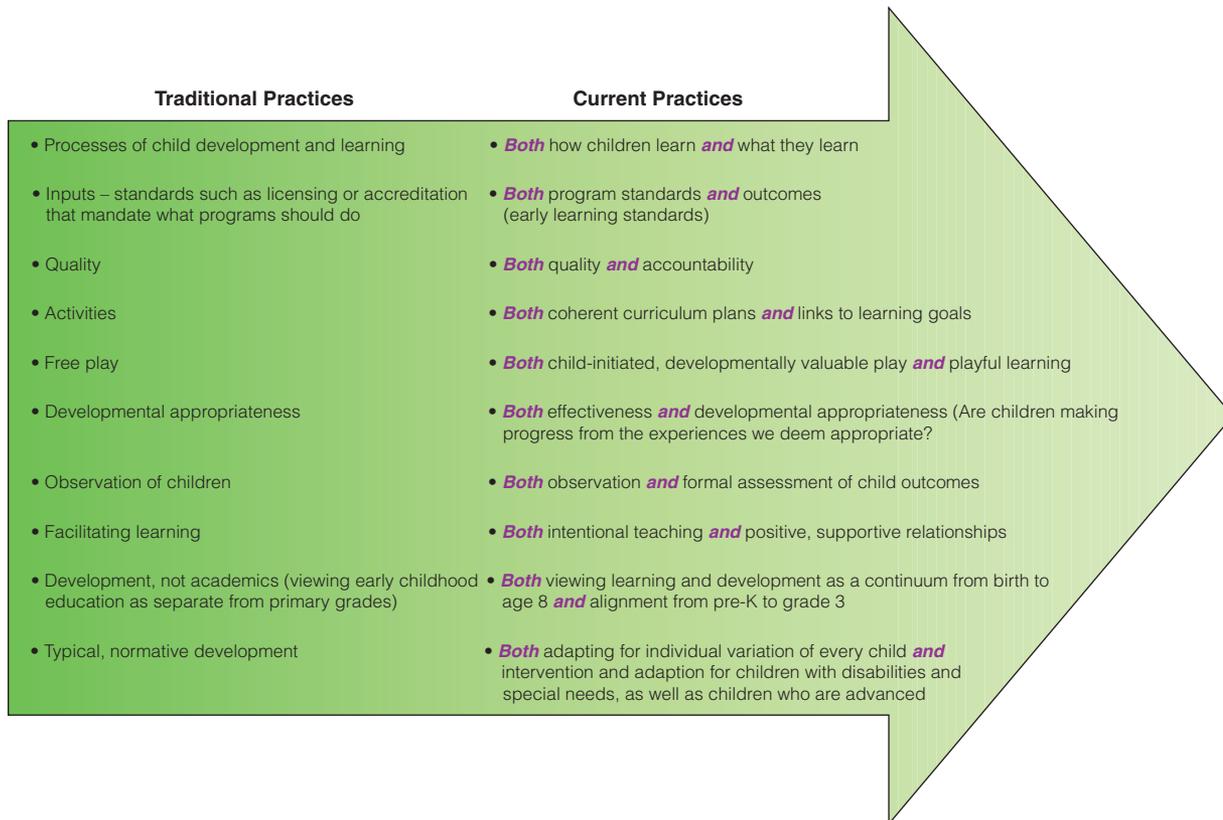


FIGURE 1.4 Continuity and Change in Early Childhood Education

revisiting the case study

... Cresthaven Child Development Center

We began this chapter by peeking in and eavesdropping on the end-of-the-year event for Cresthaven Primary School and Reed Child Development Center. Now that we have seen the broader picture of the early childhood landscape, the teachers' thoughts and emotions become more meaningful. At this event, we saw the wide range of age groups that early childhood encompasses as well as some of the diverse settings. In addition, these teachers exemplify fundamentals of intentional teaching.

The collaborative partnership between the school and child care program supports alignment of curriculum from preschool through third grade, and eases transitions for children and families. The garden project is one example of how these teachers connect the curriculum to the larger community and provide children with meaningful, hands-on learning

opportunities. Children, families, and teachers not only celebrated the good times they'd had, but children also demonstrated how much they'd learned through the displays of their work and through technology.

Across the classrooms, we saw the value of communication and responsive relationships among teachers and families. New teachers Isela and Evan have learned that early childhood education is hard work but have also begun to experience the rewards. Their patience and focus on intentional teaching is paying off for Nicky. Cooper's experience demonstrates the power of inclusion and how it benefits children with disabilities and their peers. At the end of the day, these teachers go home feeling good about what they've accomplished, but knowing that there is more to learn and new adventures awaiting them tomorrow. ▲



1 Chapter Summary

- Early childhood education is a diverse field that covers the broad age range of birth through age 8. Teachers work in child care centers and homes, preschools, kindergartens, and primary grade schools.
- Becoming a professional, intentional early childhood teacher is a challenging and rewarding opportunity. Early childhood education is expanding and is a field on the rise, benefiting from growing public recognition and support. Many career options are available to work with children or work for children.
- Early childhood professionals are part of a cultural group that shares a vocabulary, an identity, values, and beliefs. These include emphasis on the uniqueness of early childhood, the value of play, the importance of relationships and a sense of community, valuing and teaching each child as an individual, respecting linguistic and cultural diversity, and relationships with families.
- The early childhood profession sets high-quality standards for programs. The most important determinants of the quality of children's experiences and strongest predictors of positive outcomes are the social and instructional interactions that occur between teachers and children.
- Brain research demonstrates the importance of early experience to later development. A large body of evidence exists supporting the positive long-term and short-term consequences of high-quality early childhood programs.
- High-quality early education has an important role to play in improving children's school readiness and addressing social justice concerns about closing the achievement gap in our schools.
- New political and economic realities present challenges and opportunities for the field including the universal prekindergarten movement, more focus on standards and accountability, increased teacher qualifications, calls for greater alignment across the full early childhood age span, and advancing technology use by teachers and children.
- Early childhood education is a rewarding profession for many reasons, but above all, early childhood educators enter and stay in the field because they know that their work makes a difference in the lives of children and families.

observe, reflect, apply*

1. In this chapter, early childhood education is described as "a field on the rise." What factors contribute to this judgment?
 - a. Research demonstrates short-term as well as long-term benefits.
 - b. Parents assume that preschool is necessary to go to a good college.
 - c. Brain research supports the importance of experiences during the early years of life.
 - d. Funding is now available to serve every preschool child in America.
2. Which of these are good arguments for investing taxpayer dollars in early childhood education?
 - a. Funding preschool helps narrow the achievement gap before school.
 - b. Most parents cannot afford the cost of high-quality child care and early education.
 - c. Preschool children who don't speak English need to learn it before they start school.
 - d. Preschool attendance guarantees that children are ready for school.
3. Review the list of dimensions of intentional teaching on page 14. Reflect on your own attitudes and dispositions toward teaching young children. Which of these qualities best describes you? Which, if any, would make you uncomfortable? Consider the many career options open to early childhood educators. What type of a career path would be most appealing to you?
4. Interview experienced teachers who work in different settings with various age groups. Ask them about their values as early childhood educators. Reflect on how the values of professionals relate to the age group they teach and where they work. Decide if what you learn from practicing professionals is consistent with the discussion of the values of early childhood in this chapter.

**Answers to multiple choice questions appear at the end of this chapter.*

Classroom Observations

1. Visit several different types of early childhood programs such as a faith-based preschool, publicly funded or employer-sponsored child care center, a Head Start center, public prekindergarten, or family child care home. Observe the physical environments, experiences of the children, and the teacher's behaviors. Reflect on the similarities and differences among the settings. Decide why you think the programs are alike or different.
2. Observe in a kindergarten or primary grade classroom. Look for signs of the impact of standards and accountability on teaching practices and curriculum. If possible, interview the teacher and ask how the accountability movement affects teaching and assessment.



key terms

- ▲ accountability
- ▲ accreditation system
- ▲ alignment
- ▲ charter schools
- ▲ Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG)
- ▲ child care centers
- ▲ child care licensing standards
- ▲ Child Development Associate (CDA) credential
- ▲ Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- ▲ Common core standards
- ▲ culture
- ▲ developmentally appropriate practice
- ▲ dual language learners
- ▲ early childhood education
- ▲ Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R)
- ▲ early childhood special education
- ▲ Early Head Start
- ▲ early intervention
- ▲ early learning standards
- ▲ Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- ▲ family child care homes
- ▲ Head Start
- ▲ Head Start Program Performance Standards
- ▲ inclusion
- ▲ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- ▲ intentional teachers
- ▲ kindergarten
- ▲ laboratory school
- ▲ National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- ▲ parent cooperative
- ▲ prekindergarten (pre-K)
- ▲ preschool
- ▲ primary grade
- ▲ process quality
- ▲ professionals
- ▲ quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS)
- ▲ school readiness
- ▲ scientifically based instructional practices
- ▲ socioeconomic status (SES)
- ▲ structural quality
- ▲ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- ▲ universal voluntary prekindergarten

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National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

www.naeyc.org

MyEducationLab

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- Check your comprehension on the content covered in the chapter by going to the Study Plan in the Book Resources for your text. Here you will be able to take a chapter quiz, receive feedback on your

National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)

www.nieer.org

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care

This site provides access to licensing information for every state.

<http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/states.htm>

New America Foundation Early Education Initiative

www.earlyed.newamerica.net

answers, and then access Review, Practice, and Enrichment activities to enhance your understanding of chapter content.

*Answers to Multiple Choice Questions

1. *a* and *c*. Not all parents link preschool to college success and we are far from having funding available for universal preschool.
2. *a* and *b*. Preschool may help children learn English, but speaking English should not be a prerequisite for kindergarten entry and, although preschool increases children's readiness for school, there are no guarantees.

2

Building on a Tradition of Excellence

thinking ahead

- 1 Why is it important to learn from the past? How has the view of children changed through history?
- 2 How did European educators such as Comenius, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Montessori influence early childhood education in the United States?
- 3 What events and people propelled the kindergarten, nursery school, and child care movements?
- 4 What were the experiences and contributions of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans in the history of early childhood education?
- 5 How did trends in early childhood history come together and influence the launch of the national Head Start program?





Grant, Melinda, and Reece are enrolled in an introductory course in early childhood education. Their first assignment is to observe a preschool classroom. The professor says, “I want you to pretend that you are from another planet, or from such a remote part of the earth that you have never seen a preschool classroom before. Observe for one hour and write down exactly what you see there. Don’t try to guess what I want you to observe or second-guess yourself, just write what you see.”

After completing their observations, Grant, Melinda, and Reece compare notes. Their lists are different in some respects but the following items appear on all three lists: child-sized furniture, one-inch cube blocks, and wooden parquetry blocks in various colors and shapes. They see groups of children building roads and towers with wooden blocks. Each classroom has a library area with picture books, alphabet books, and stories (each room even has a copy of *Goodnight, Moon* on the bookrack). One class has sandpaper letters. There are also woodworking benches, sand tables, a posted recipe for cooking a snack, and dress-up clothes and props. In all three classes children are actively playing or working with teachers in small groups. One group had been to visit the firehouse (as evidenced by a chart on the wall recording children’s remembrances) and there are firehats and hoses to play with. At snack time in one room, the children sing “Happy Birthday” to their friend.

During class, the professor asks each student to share one thing on his or her list and then for a show of hands to see who else had seen the same thing. There is remarkable uniformity among the observations. The professor explains, “What you observed are traces of the history of early childhood education. Your unfiltered observations are like the first steps archaeologists take in uncovering what has gone before. You may be surprised to find that all these things you observed can be traced back to specific people or events in the history of the field. They were put there and they remain there for a reason. First, we’ll find out how they got there, and the rest of this course will help you understand why they are still there or how practices have changed in the intervening years.” ▲





MyEducationLab

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Early childhood educators tend to like stories. We love sharing stories about the enchanting things that young children say and do. We listen to parents' stories about their children. We tell stories about our own childhoods. And we exchange stories about our teaching—sometimes when we have a bad day, and almost always when we have a very good day. Those good days usually involve seeing an exciting example of a child's developmental progress.

Stories—that is what *history* is. In fact, the two words have the same Latin origin. The goal of this chapter, then, is to tell the story of early childhood education. We begin by describing how studying history is relevant. Next, we describe how the concept of childhood has changed over the course of history. Finally, we tell several stories about major historical movements and how they influence early childhood education practice today. Because parts of these stories occurred simultaneously and overlap, a timeline of major events appears in Table 2.1.

▲ Learning from the Past

Early childhood education is a field with a long and rich history going back to ancient times. Its history differs from that of education for older children, which has been considered a public responsibility for more than a century. By contrast, young children's care and education are so closely tied to families that private and public support for early childhood care and education is a very recent phenomenon. In addition, early childhood education is a more interdisciplinary field than is elementary education, with historical influences coming from not only child development and education but also from medicine, psychology, sociology, and other areas. As a result, many historical paths have converged to lead the field to where it is today.

Why History Is Relevant

The history of early childhood education, especially during the past 150 years, reveals that the past and the present are inexorably linked. Most of the current issues and controversies have been visited in some form in the past. For example, even all those years ago, teachers grappled with questions such as these: What environments and materials should be provided? What are the goals for children's learning and development? How should children be taught? What is the role of the teacher? How should parents be involved? Who is qualified to be a teacher? All of these issues have dominated debates about early childhood education since its inception, and continue to do so.

Rather than assuming that these issues are being encountered for the first time, understanding how they have been resolved in the past can inform current discussions. One reason this is so important is that “the solution to every problem contains the seeds of a new problem” (Bredekamp & Glowacki, 1996). For example, early in the 20th century, advocates fought for kindergarten to be part of public schools. Succeeding in doing so eventually meant that kindergarten teachers were able to earn public school salaries and services became available for all children. But this solution also created a new problem—kindergartens became, and still are, more like first grades than like preschools in curriculum expectations and teaching methods. Today's

Traces of the history of the field of early childhood education can be found in any preschool classroom today. What in this classroom environment might have been present in a preschool 80 years ago? Why do you think it is still being used?



TABLE 2.1 Timeline of Major Events in Early Childhood Education

Date	Event in the History of Early Childhood Education
1658	John Amos Comenius publishes <i>Orbis Pictus</i> , the first picture book for children.
1690	John Locke proposes that children are born as <i>tabula rasa</i> , blank slates, promoting the importance of education and the environment.
1762	Jean-Jacques Rousseau publishes <i>Emile</i> , promoting the idea of the natural goodness of children and the need for education to build their inherent potential.
1804	Johann Pestalozzi opens a school based on his philosophy of education. Friedrich Froebel and Robert Owen study with him there.
1825	Robert Owen opens a child care center for mill workers in New Harmony, Indiana.
1837	Friedrich Froebel, the “father of kindergarten,” establishes his first “children’s garden” in Germany.
1856	Margarethe Schurz founds the first German-speaking kindergarten in the United States.
1860	Elizabeth Palmer Peabody organizes the first English-speaking kindergarten.
1873	Susan Blow founds the first public school kindergarten in St. Louis, Missouri.
1875	Charities set up day nurseries in immigrant communities.
1892	The International Kindergarten Union is founded.
1895	G. Stanley Hall lectures kindergarten teachers on child development study, beginning the connection between the child study movement and early education.
1896	John and Alice Dewey found the University of Chicago Laboratory School, where they develop and implement progressive education ideas.
1897	The first meeting is held of the National Congress of Mothers, which later becomes the National Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).
1903	The first day nursery for African American children opens in New York City.
1907	Maria Montessori starts <i>Casa dei Bambini</i> in Rome, demonstrating the effectiveness of her method with poor children.
1909	The first White House Conference on Children focuses on mental health and guidance.
1911	Margaret and Rachel Macmillan found an open-air nursery in London that focuses on children’s health and education.
1911	Arnold Gesell begins the Child Study Institute at Yale University.
1912	The U.S. Children’s Bureau is established.
1919	The White House Conference on Standards of Child Welfare issues statements that influence child labor laws and maternal and child health programs.
1920	The 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution grants women the right to vote.
1921	Patty Smith Hill starts a progressive nursery school at Teachers College.
1926	Patty Smith Hill founds the National Committee on Nursery Schools (later NANE) to establish a professional organization for nursery school educators.
1926	Nursery schools are linked to the study of child development and education. Day nurseries focus on needs of poor and immigrant families.
1929	The National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) is formally established with Lois Meek Stoltz as its first president (later becomes NAEYC). <i>Minimum Essentials of Nursery Education</i> is its first publication.
1930	IKU changes its name to the Association for Childhood Education (later adds <i>International</i>).
1931	Local and state licensing of day nurseries begins, but with little consistency or enforcement.
1933	Works Progress Administration (WPA) establishes national nursery schools serving poor children and employing teachers, nurses, and social workers during the Great Depression.
1933	George Stoddard starts the Society for Research in Child Development.
1935	The Social Security Act passes, creating Aid to Dependent Children (welfare program for mothers to care for children), becomes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

(Continued)

TABLE 2.1 Timeline of Major Events in Early Childhood Education (Continued)

Date	Event in the History of Early Childhood Education
1937	NANE's conference is the last one held in the segregated South until 1964. NANE took an early stand on equal rights.
1941	The Lanham Act provides funds for child care during World War II, primarily for mothers serving the war effort. Selected WPA nurseries also receive funding.
1943	Kaiser Shipbuilding, using Lanham Act funds, starts two child care centers for employees, offering high-quality care for children and comprehensive services for families.
1945	NANE cancels its biennial conference because of the war, but publishes the first issue of the <i>Bulletin</i> , which later becomes the journal <i>Young Children</i> .
1946	UNICEF is established within the United Nations. Federal funding for the Lanham Act is withdrawn after the war ends.
1952	<i>Ding Dong School</i> , the first television program for preschoolers, is created by Dr. Frances Horwich (Miss Frances), former NANE president.
1957	Russia launches a satellite, <i>Sputnik</i> , sparking intense focus on the quality of American education, especially math and science and, to a lesser extent, early education.
1958	The NYC Inter-City Day Care Council becomes the National Committee for the Day Care of Children. In 1968 it becomes the Day Care and Child Development Council, and in 1982 the Child Care Action Campaign, which advocates for quality standards for child care centers and improved staff compensation.
1960	Katherine Whiteside Taylor launches organization that becomes Parent Cooperative Preschools International.
1962	The Perry Preschool Project begins in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Later becomes the HighScope Educational Research Foundation.
1964	The Economic Opportunity Act begins the War on Poverty, which includes Head Start, a comprehensive program for preschoolers of low-income families.
1965	Head Start begins as a summer demonstration program.
1966	Concerned about the quality of Head Start summer training, NAEYC contracts to study and recommend training sites based on faculty and curriculum.
1966	The Children's Television Workshop creates <i>Sesame Street</i> .
1968	The federal government funds the establishment of model preschool programs for children with disabilities (then called <i>handicapped children</i>).
1968	The Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements (FIDCR) to set a national standard for child care funding are proposed but never implemented. (Their demise later becomes impetus for NAEYC to launch its accreditation system.)
1970	The White House Conference on Children endorses the Comprehensive Child Development Act to provide public funding for child care and early education; vetoed by President Richard Nixon in 1971.
1970	The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) is founded.
1971	Stride Rite Corporation in Boston starts the first employer-sponsored child care center.
1973	Marian Wright Edelman founds the Children's Defense Fund. The National Head Start Association is founded. The Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children is formed to focus on young children with special needs.
1974	The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act passes.
1975	The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) is enacted; later amended as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
1975	The Head Start Program Performance Standards are promulgated to ensure quality and consistency.
1979	The federally funded National Day Care Study is released, linking higher quality to smaller group sizes and trained staff.
1982	The National Association for Family Child Care is established.
1984	The HighScope Educational Research Foundation publishes <i>Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Project</i> , documenting the lasting positive consequences and cost effectiveness of high-quality preschool education.

**TABLE 2.1** Timeline of Major Events in Early Childhood Education (Continued)

Date	Event in the History of Early Childhood Education
1985	NAEYC launches its national accreditation system for early childhood programs.
1986	Public Law 99–457 establishes early intervention support for children with special needs from birth to age 3 and their families.
1987	NAEYC publishes its position statement on <i>Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8</i> , which is significantly revised in 1997 and again in 2009.
1989	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is adopted.
1990	The Act for Better Child Care passes, providing funding for Child Care and Development Block Grants to states, the first law that specifically provides funding for child care support.
1990	The National Education Goals Panel establishes goals for 2000, including “By the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn,” raising public awareness about early childhood education and services.
1992	The Reggio Emilia approach becomes well-known in the United States. The <i>One Hundred Languages of Children</i> exhibit tours and delegations visit schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy.
1995	Head Start Reauthorization establishes Early Head Start to serve low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers.
1997	The Individuals with Disabilities Act is reauthorized, strengthening early childhood services.
1997	The <i>I Am Your Child</i> public awareness campaign is launched, disseminating information about brain research and early development.
1998	The National Research Council releases the very influential report <i>Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children</i> .
2000	The National Research Council releases <i>From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development</i> and <i>Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers</i> .
2001	Congress passes the No Child Left Behind Act to increase accountability and equity in public education and focus on evidence-based practices. NCLB funds Reading First for K–3, and Early Reading First for preschool.
2005	NAEYC launches its “reinvented” accreditation system with revised standards and procedures.
2005	The advocacy organization Pre-K Now works with states to significantly increase public awareness and funding for universal, voluntary prekindergarten.
2005	The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University disseminates research in support of funding for early childhood programs.
2007	The Foundation for Child Development supports age 3 to grade 3 initiative to promote continuity in education of children across this age range.
2007	Congress passes Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act.
2007	National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics releases <i>Para Nuestros Niños: Expanding and Improving Early Education for Hispanic Children in the United States</i> .
2008	Forty-nine states have Early Learning Standards for preschool children.
2009	National Research Council releases <i>Mathematics Learning in Early Childhood: Paths to Excellence and Equity</i> .
2009	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (“stimulus package”) includes significant investments in early childhood education.
2011	The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services award \$500 million in Early Learning Challenge Grants to improve the quality of early childhood state systems in 9 states. The U.S. Department of Education establishes the Office of Early Learning.

Source: Based on NAEYC at 75: *Reflections on the Past, Challenges for the Future*, 2001, Washington, DC: NAEYC.

advocates for public prekindergarten need to be aware of this history as they pursue their goals.

Consider how this phenomenon may be evident in your own life. A problem that many college students face is the high cost of tuition. Students solve this problem in different ways—taking out loans, working full time or part time while going to school, or choosing less expensive schools. But each of these solutions can lead to new challenges.



The loans need to be repaid; a full-time job delays graduation; the accessible schools may not meet the students' needs. In turn, each of these "problems" leads to a subsequent solution, and the process begins anew.

The idea that solving problems creates new challenges can be discouraging; however, it need not be. As long as we are working on solving new problems or challenges, we are making progress. History is composed of such progress in spurts as well as in setbacks. Explore this idea of a cycle of solutions and challenges by reading and discussing the *How Would You Respond . . . When Solutions Create New Problems?* feature.

Avoid Getting Stuck in the Past

Just as it is true that we continue to confront questions and challenges similar to those faced by our forebears, it is equally true that responses to these issues need to reflect current knowledge. As we will see, many of the principles and values that guide the field today are remarkably consistent with earlier views (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). There are also essential differences based on newer research, theories, and realities. Getting stuck in the past can lead to defending past practices simply because we have always done it that way. Knowing why it was "done that way," however, can lead to changing it for the better.

Aspire to Make a Difference for Children

History is not just the story of events but the stories of people. The history of early childhood education is replete with inspiring stories of women and men who devoted themselves to improving the lives of children and families. Many "dauntless women" (Snyder, 1972) contributed in countless ways to early childhood education at a time when women's opportunities for higher education and careers were severely restricted. Similarly, men have been at the forefront of building the profession even though children were considered the purview of women.

The stories of these pioneers of early childhood education, who were forward looking in both their thinking and their deeds, serve as inspiration and motivation for current and future professionals. Learning about their lives, the obstacles they faced in their work, and the brilliance of their minds sets a high standard for the rest of us.

How Would You Respond...

. . . When Solutions Create New Problems?

The Situation The federal government passes legislation that provides grants to states for innovative early childhood systems to improve the quality of programs and outcomes for children.

To receive the funding, states must do several things, such as align preschool and elementary school learning standards, monitor and evaluate program quality, improve professional development for teachers, and implement a curriculum and assessment system focusing on kindergarten readiness. Many advocates for children are delighted by this unprecedented support for early childhood education, but some are wary of the unintended consequences.

What Might Happen? Based on lessons from the past, what new problems might be generated by this solution in relation to each of the following issues?

- Qualifications of teachers
- Kindergarten readiness testing
- Standards for children's learning
- Impact on curriculum
- The role of parents
- Impact on child care standards and quality across states
- Teacher compensation

What other issues might be raised by this infusion of federal money in early childhood education?



Advocate for Change

Understanding the paths history has taken is important if early childhood educators are to be successful in improving services in the future. Even a brief summary of historical underpinnings reveals that change is a constant. For example, at times, services for children have been a priority while at other times (regularly, in fact), the services are threatened. The Head Start program is a case in point. In the mid-1960s, Head Start was launched to great fanfare as a means to end poverty in this country, an impossibly unrealistic goal. But over the years, the program has fallen prey to changing public attitudes and funding priorities.

Throughout these years, some advocates have set idealistic goals, which can be inspiring; yet history has taught us that unrealistic goals doom a program to failure. In the intervening years, advocates have made it plain that Head Start plays a key role in empowering low income families to improve their lives and in preparing their children for success in school. However, Head Start is not a cure for the ills of poverty nor is it an inoculation against poor school experiences that might follow. To be most effective, advocates for improving Head Start and other early childhood programs and services should use the lessons of successful efforts in the past.

Examining the history of childhood education reveals that there have been significant changes—transformations, actually—in how children are viewed. In the sections that follow, we examine the changing view of childhood and its effect on children's lives.

The Changing View of Children

Different periods of history have had differing perspectives on children and the idea of childhood itself (Aries, 1962). These perspectives matter because they have direct implications for how children are treated and what kinds of education they are provided. Different eras in history have tended to view children as miniature adults, born in sin, blank slates, innocent, economic valuables, competent, and as citizens with rights. At different times, one or the other of these perspectives has tended to prevail. To some extent, all of these views of children persist to this day. In the sections that follow, each of the perspectives of childhood just mentioned is described, along with the potential positive and negative consequences for children's lives.

Children as Miniature Adults

From the Middle Ages to about the 17th century in Western Europe, children were basically seen as adults on a smaller scale (Aries, 1962). Children dressed like adults, did adult-like work, and even played the same games. In fact, it wasn't until the 15th and 16th centuries that children appeared in paintings wearing specialized children's clothing.

In the 18th century, discovery of smallpox inoculation and better conditions in general reduced the death rate among children, which likely contributed to changes in the idea of childhood (Aries, 1962). Previously, the extremely high infant mortality rate motivated families to produce a large number of children to ensure the survival of a few. Families depended on their children to provide labor to support the family. As children's survival became less precarious, so too did their value as individuals and the image attached to them.

Today, the image of children as miniature adults is apparent once again in the clothes children wear and the images they are exposed to through the media. Primary-grade girls dress like teenagers or young adults. Concern exists that they are too sexy too soon (Levin & Kilbourne, 2008). Preschoolers engage in team sports previously reserved for older children. Children's toys have been replaced by adult-like video games and computers.



Centuries ago, children were viewed as “miniature adults.” Children today are once again dressing like adults, playing adult-type games, and being exposed to adult images through the media at younger and younger ages.

Children in Need of Redemption

The image of the child during the 1300s to 1800s was shaped by the religious belief that children were born in sin and needed redemption. Misbehavior of any kind was considered sinful and punished harshly.

Schools in Europe and America in the 18th and 19th centuries were based on this image of children. Children learned to read from the Bible, recited memorized passages, and were often beaten or ridiculed for errors. Many people today continue to believe that severe punishment is necessary to shape children’s moral character.

Children as Blank Slates

English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) countered the religious argument that children are born with a predetermined sinful nature. Instead, he believed that children are born as *tabula rasa*, blank slates. What gets written on the slates is determined by their experiences in the environment. Locke’s view was a step forward because it rejected the notion of inherent sinfulness and strongly emphasized the importance and value of education.

Locke was accurate in assuming that environmental experiences play a major role in children’s learning; however, he did not see individual differences in children or how they actively shape their own experiences. Nevertheless, Locke’s image of children as blank slates persists. Many schools today still operate on the notion that children are empty vessels that need to be filled, rather than active participants in the process of education.

Children as Innocents

In contrast to Locke’s theory as well as the notion of children as sinners in need of redemption, French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) introduced the Romantic image of the child as innocent. Rousseau’s novel *Emile* promoted the idea that children are born good rather than evil, and that they have inherent abilities upon which to build (Wolfe, 2000). He thought education should build on children’s natural goodness.

Rousseau believed that it is important to observe children. He was among the first to propose the concept of stages of development that children pass through. He believed that children should not be rushed through stages, nor that one stage was simply preparation for another, a concept that continues to influence practice 150 years later.

Rousseau’s image of childhood was a radical departure from the views of his day. Although he did not put these ideas into practice, they influenced many thinkers who followed and continue to have an influence today. Early childhood education has a strong tradition of focusing on the positive in children to develop individual potential.

Children’s Economic Value

At various points in history, children’s value has been calculated in response to a number of factors. Even today, some consider children to be their parents’ property. They were, and still are in some communities, economically necessary to contribute work to the sustenance and care of the family; this includes taking care of other children and parents in old age. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, however, child labor laws limited children’s potential economic contributions to family well-being. As children’s economic contributions diminished, they began to take on more intrinsic emotional value in the family. For example, insurance companies compensated parents for a child’s death or injury not only because of the costs involved and the potential income lost, but also as an attempt to compensate for the emotional loss (Zellizer, 1981).



The Competent Child

Scientific study of children beginning in the 20th century led to an alternative view of childhood—the **competent child**—the idea that children are active players in their own development and learning. The more researchers learned about children’s competencies beginning at birth, the less plausible it became to see them as blank slates. Brain research in recent decades has further reinforced this image of children’s innate competence.

The image of the competent child has had a major impact on early childhood practices and the larger culture. But negative consequences can emanate as well. Producers of videotapes and television and computer programs claim that they can teach a baby to read or produce a future Einstein. In addition, the image of the competent child has contributed to the trend to hurry young children through childhood toward expectations or experiences more appropriate for older children or adults (Elkind, 2001; Levin & Kilbourne, 2008).

The Child as a Citizen with Rights

The image of the child throughout history has come almost full circle in its relation to adults. But rather than seeing children as small-scale adults, a present-day development is to view children as citizens who have rights just as adults do (Hall & Rudkin, 2011). In a democratic society, rights are implemented as laws such as those that protect children from abuse or prosecution as adults. Similarly, toys and products used by children must meet safety regulations.

Internationally, the image of a child with rights has gained widespread attention. In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (www.unicef.org) went into effect. It has been ratified by every developed country in the world except Somalia and the United States. The declaration calls for protection of all children from physical, mental, and sexual abuse. One provision states that, although parents have primary responsibility for children’s upbringing, states should provide appropriate assistance and support for child care programs. This is one of several provisions that have been politically controversial in this country. Although the United States has not endorsed the UN Convention, its existence promotes an image of the child as worthy of rights.

Images of Childhood Today

Elements of all of these images of childhood are present in children’s lives today and influence how they are treated. Although our country tends to see children as innocents in need of protection by parents and the government, we also propel them into adult experiences at young ages. Our schools swing back and forth between taking an approach that children are empty vessels or viewing them as competent contributors to their own learning. On the one hand, children are highly valued, and on the other hand, they are abused and neglected.

As we explore the evolution of early childhood practice in the sections that follow, it will become apparent which of these images has had the greater influence on the field. We can only present highlights of the rich history of the field here; for a more complete picture, consult the timeline of major events listed in Table 2.1.

▲ European Influences on American Early Childhood Education

Like much of American history, early education was strongly influenced by Western European ideas. Although European ideas were not the only, nor necessarily the best, educational concepts in the world, current practices in the United States strongly reflect these early influences. Later in this chapter, we consider early childhood history through a wider lens.

Rousseau’s belief in the inherent goodness and potential of children had a strong impact on the educational ideas and practices that followed. Two other thinkers who shared similar views are Comenius and Pestalozzi. Unlike Rousseau, both created schools that implemented their vision.

competent child The image of children as active players in their own development and learning.



John Amos Comenius

John Amos Comenius (Jan Komensky in his native Czech) (1592–1670) was a minister who wrote about educational reform and directed a school where he could put his ideas into practice. He believed in three key ideas (Wolfe, 2000): (1) Teaching methods needed to be radically changed from punitive approaches to make learning easier, deeper, and more pleasant; (2) teachers should engage children with nature and follow their lead; and (3) children should learn in their own language, rather than in Latin.

To accomplish his last goal, Comenius wrote a new kind of book, *Orbis Pictus*, or “the world in pictures.” Popular for the next 200 years, this was the first children’s picture book or illustrated textbook ever published. It was organized around topics of interest such as birds and plants and included pictures with labels attached. Comenius also wrote the first illustrated alphabet book to teach children to read in their own languages.

Some of the educational ideas that Comenius practiced in his school were radical for his time but sound familiar to early childhood educators today. For example, he thought the early years were an extremely important foundation for later learning. He believed that children learn through their senses and need to be active, and he felt that children’s interests and firsthand experiences promote learning and memory. Comenius believed that children are born in the image of God, and was vehemently opposed to physical punishment (Wolfe, 2000). Like Rousseau, he identified developmental stages.

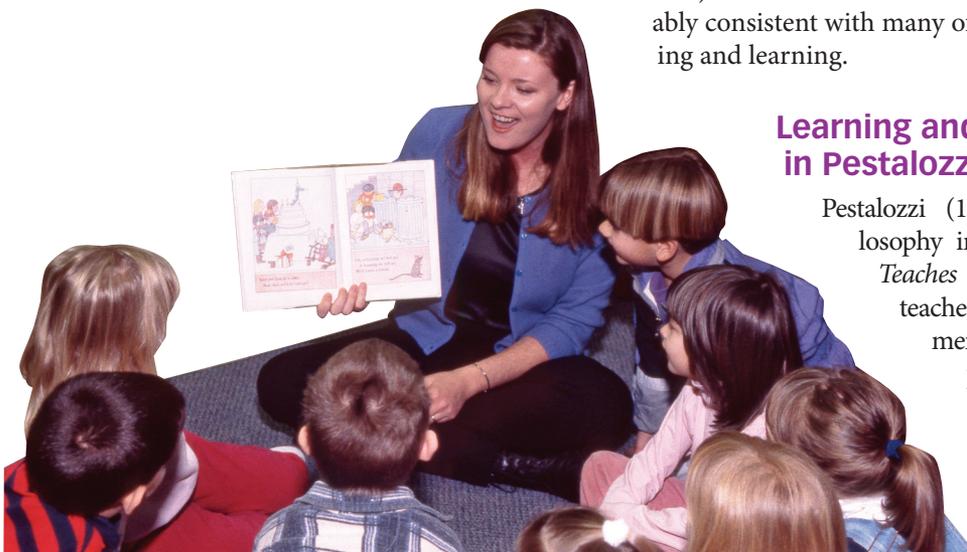
Comenius’s ideas have endured for centuries. For example, in the 1990s Eastern European countries that had been under Communist dictatorship moved toward democracy. One strategy was to reform previously rigid educational systems. With the help of American philanthropy, the International Step by Step Association (www.issa.nl) was founded to develop Head Start–like preschool programs. There was some concern that these “American” ideas—such as child-centered education—would be culturally inappropriate. However, these concerns underestimated the lasting reverence for native son Komensky (Comenius)—who is, after all, the forerunner of much of American early childhood education.

Johann Pestalozzi

Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827) was a Swiss educator who, like Comenius, founded his own school and trained the teachers. He believed that all children—including children who lived in poverty—could benefit from education (Nourot, 2005). The field’s current views of best practice are remarkably consistent with many of Pestalozzi’s ideas about teaching and learning.

Learning and Teaching in Pestalozzi’s School

Pestalozzi (1894/2007) described his philosophy in a book titled *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*. He believed that teachers must study child development. He thought that learning proceeds through stages, with children needing to master skills and knowledge before moving on to the next stage (Wolfe, 2000). Pestalozzi promoted what came to be called the “whole child” point of view—that children’s



First created more than 400 years ago, picture books remain one of the most popular, valuable, and engaging learning materials in early childhood programs and homes.



physical, emotional, social, moral, and intellectual development are integrated. He called these “the hand, heart, and head.”

Other important ideas of Pestalozzi included the notion that children need to discover ideas for themselves through their own activity—a precursor of Piaget’s theory of **constructivism**. He rejected punishment and threats as motivators and felt that instead, children are motivated to learn by their interests. Like many early theorists, Pestalozzi viewed development as a natural unfolding or blossoming from within, with teachers acting as gardeners who nurture the process rather than direct it. Although this view is simpler than our understanding of development today, it persisted well into the 20th century.

Impact of Pestalozzi’s Work

Pestalozzi’s ideas directly influenced schools for young children in the 19th century. Particularly influential was his notion of object lessons—learning from direct observation and sensory experience in the natural world—that begin with the here and now and move beyond (Wolfe, 2000).

A well-known school influenced by Pestalozzi was founded by Robert Owen (1771–1858) as part of his idealized community in Scotland, New Lanark. Owen spread his ideas to America by founding a similar model community in New Harmony, Indiana. Although his experiment did not survive long, the school provided care and education for hundreds of children, from infancy to age 10, whose parents worked in the mills—one of the earliest examples of a child care center.

Friedrich Froebel

Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852) built on Pestalozzi’s ideas but extended them to develop educational materials. His view of development as a process of natural unfolding is evident in the name of his school, a “garden for children.” Froebel is well known as the “father of the kindergarten.”

Froebel believed in the innate goodness and capacities of children, and saw God’s image in them. Like Pestalozzi, he believed that education should be based on children’s interests and their active involvement, and that teachers need to understand children’s development by directly observing their actions (Wolfe, 2000).

He described stages of development that are similar to those Piaget articulated in the 20th century. He saw infancy (birth to 3 years) as focused on the family and the infant’s relationship with the mother. He wrote *Mother Play and Nursery Songs* to assist mothers in their interactions with very young children—something most mothers today take for granted. Froebel’s second stage (ages 3 to 7), for which he developed his kindergarten materials, was the focus of most of his work. The third stage (ages 7 to 10) focused on more formal school instruction.

Froebel’s Kindergarten

Froebel’s metaphor of the children’s garden was more than poetry. He strongly believed that children’s learning is a process of unfolding from within. He also believed that learning would occur on the child’s own timetable and not until the child was ready. Froebel’s kindergarten emphasized children’s free play, singing, and movement (Nourot, 2005). The materials he developed, which were called **Froebel’s occupations and gifts**, were used to guide and structure children’s play. As a result, Froebel’s view of “free” play was not as free as some interpret today.

The role of the teacher in Froebel’s kindergarten was to be like a gardener. Teachers were to observe, nurture, and help but not interfere with the natural growth of the child. They needed to be aware of children’s development, however, so they could provide a new challenge as children engaged with the gifts and occupations.

constructivism Learning theory derived from the work of Jean Piaget which assumes that children actively build their knowledge from firsthand experiences in stimulating environments.

Froebel’s occupations and gifts Invented by Froebel for kindergartners, occupations were planned experiences designed to train children’s eye–hand coordination and mental activity, and gifts were concrete materials, many of which influenced later toy development.



Considered the father of the kindergarten, Friedrich Froebel invented special educational materials—called gifts—some of which are still used today, such as small wooden cubes, parquetry blocks, and Lincoln Logs.

Froebel's Gifts and Occupations

Froebel's gifts were concrete materials for children to manipulate in specific ways. The first gift was a box of six wooden balls in the colors of the spectrum—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet—plus corresponding strings. Each child could use these materials in many creative ways, but Froebel and his teachers identified more than 100 games to play with this one gift and accompanying songs and rhymes (Wolfe, 2000).

Another gift was a cube that could be divided into eight smaller cubes and put back together to form a whole. Children could play many games with this gift, but it

also promoted basic math concepts related to number and geometry. Froebel also invented parquetry blocks—a set of flat, colored, wooden shapes that could be put together to form various designs. Other gifts included sticks and rings made of wire and natural materials such as seeds and pebbles. The same or similar materials are prevalent in early childhood classrooms today where children use them in creative ways, and also to learn mathematics and science.

In contrast to the gifts, occupations were planned experiences designed to train children's eye-hand coordination and mental activity (Wolfe, 2000). The occupations included activities such as drawing on grid paper, lacing paper strips, weaving mats, folding and cutting paper into designs, constructing with sticks, or making models from cardboard.

Froebel believed that the use of the gifts and occupations engaged children in symbolically representing objects and events in the real world—such as creating a model or drawing a picture of a building. The importance of representation, which Froebel pre-
saged, is now supported by research.

Impact of Froebel's Work

Froebel's work had a major impact on education in the United States, leading directly to a large-scale kindergarten movement here. Several teachers and teacher educators who studied Froebel's methods in Europe—"kindergartners" as they were called—transplanted his ideas to this country.

Kindergartens today bear less and less resemblance to Froebel's "children's garden"; today they have become more like formal first grades (Graue, 2009). However, many of his basic ideas are still evident in preschool and child care programs. His gifts and occupations were clearly the prototypes for many of the toys and materials, such as one-inch cube and parquetry blocks, that are pervasive in preschool classrooms. Common activities—constructing models or using natural materials in art and projects—also mirror some of his occupations.

Froebel's work had a significant impact on the development of American kindergartens, which we return to later in this chapter. First, we visit another European educator who lived a century later than Froebel, but whose work also stands out for its contributions to the field—Maria Montessori.

Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori (1870–1952) was a major figure in the history of early childhood education. A brilliant woman, she was Italy's first female physician. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and her face graced the 1,000 lira note until Italy abandoned the lira for the euro. Montessori was, and probably always will be, the only early childhood educator whose face adorned a currency.



History of the Montessori Method

Montessori's contributions grew out of her work with poor children in the slums of Rome. The prevailing opinion was that these children were considered to be mentally deficient. However, Montessori believed that what appeared to be mental retardation was not biologically based, but rather caused by the lack of stimulation in their environments.

In 1907, she started a program for children, ages 4 through 7, called *Casa dei Bambini* (Children's House), and developed a highly successful approach to teaching the children, which revealed that they were not mentally disabled at all. Montessori demonstrated that educating needy children is a less costly and more effective strategy than waiting until they create problems for society. This is the same justification that was used to launch Head Start, and it is still the core rationale for much of the current investment in early education.

Key Elements of the Montessori Method

The Montessori method includes several basic elements. In the sections that follow, we briefly describe Montessori's views about children and learning, the environment, and the teacher's role.

Image of Children: The Absorbent Mind. Like other key figures in early childhood history, Montessori (1909/1964) believed that children develop naturally in an organized environment. Her image of the child is the **absorbent mind**—actively learning from sensory experiences. She also believed that children from 4 to 7 years old are internally motivated to interact with the world, and do not need external encouragement or rewards.

Where Montessori deviated greatly from others in the field was in her opinion of play. Montessori dismissed play as a waste of children's time (Snyder, 1972; Wolfe, 2000). She also minimized the value of social interaction for children's learning. As evidence, children each had an individual small mat to work on and not be disturbed by others.

A Prepared Learning Environment. Montessori believed that poor children deserve high-quality experiences. She thought that children need an orderly environment that supports their ability to work on and complete tasks independently. Accordingly, she designed classroom environments and materials that demonstrate respect for children. Montessori innovations included child-sized tables and other furnishings, and materials arranged on open shelves for easy access by children.

To facilitate learning and prevent wasted time, she developed educational materials for children to use in prescribed ways. Montessori designed self-correcting learning materials for children, many of which are still commonly used. For example, she created puzzles with little knobs attached to each piece, for very young children to practice the pincer grasp used for writing; and to practice fine motor skills, she invented a cloth board with buttons and buttonholes. Montessori emphasized that there was one right way to use each of her materials. She did not consider her materials to be toys; instead, she viewed them as educational tools. Children were also taught practical life skills such as washing a table and sweeping a floor.

Montessori's belief in sensory learning extended to academic areas as well, specifically writing, reading, and mathematics. For example, she created sandpaper alphabets so that children could feel the shapes of the letters as a first step toward writing. She thought children should learn to write as a strategy to teach reading. This was an innovative concept for its time (when promoting reading at an early age was not accepted by her peers in early education), and also presaged later understandings of the strong connection between writing and reading in becoming literate.

The Teacher's Role. Montessori's view of the teacher's role is to prepare the environment, observe children, and demonstrate materials but not to interfere with their natural exploration. Although teachers' interactions with children are very intentional in

 This **video** shows the arrangement and the materials found in a typical Montessori classroom. As you watch, reflect on the key elements of the Montessori Method and the role of the teacher in a Montessori classroom.

absorbent mind Maria Montessori's image of the child as actively learning from sensory experiences.



the Montessori method, much of the learning is assumed to occur as children interact with materials. The teacher presents brief individual or small-group lessons, but most of the day children choose their activities. Their choices have limits, however, because the adults arrange those choices.

Impact of Montessori's Work

From 1910 to 1920, interest in Montessori's approach gained popularity in the United States; several elements of her approach remain widely accepted. However, overall interest in her methods soon faded here, primarily due to her unwillingness to adapt to new knowledge and her rejection of key elements of American philosophy, such as the importance of play.

Not until the 1950s was interest in Montessori revived in the United States. In contrast to Montessori's original intent to serve poor children, Montessori schools in the United States have tended to be private, serving a more affluent population. In recent years, however, the approach has been embraced by some magnet and charter public schools. A study of a public Montessori school in Milwaukee found that the approach contributed positively to 5-year-olds' literacy, math, and social skills (Lillard, 2005). The researchers also found positive effects on children's creativity and social skills at age 12 (Lillard & Else-Quest, 2006). Maria Montessori's lasting contribution to the field was her development of Montessori materials and her impact on the organization of environments.

▲ Early Childhood Movements in the United States

The following sections present three interwoven stories of early childhood education in America—the kindergarten movement, progressive education, and the nursery school movement. These stories are described separately but, in reality, they happened simultaneously and were inextricably connected. A parallel story—the child care movement—was also occurring, but played out differently as you will read later in this section.



Montessori classrooms are specially designed environments in which children learn by interacting with the materials. What skills might children acquire by working with the Montessori materials depicted here?

The Kindergarten Movement

The United States provided fertile ground for the growth of Froebel's "children's gardens." In the sections that follow, we describe how the movement began and spread widely and its lasting impact.

Early Days of the Kindergarten Movement

The earliest leaders in the kindergarten movement transplanted Froebel's ideas directly. The first kindergarten in the United States was founded by Margarethe Schurz (1833–1876) in Wisconsin in 1856 (Snyder, 1972). Schurz had studied with Froebel and, upon immigrating to the United States, started a German-speaking school to teach her own and neighbors' children. Later, Schurz met Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (1804–1894) and their encounter was the impetus for the American kindergarten movement.



Elizabeth Peabody was part of a well-known family of social reformers. Her sister, Mary, was married to Horace Mann, considered to be the father of public education in the United States. In Boston, Elizabeth Peabody organized the first English-speaking kindergarten in 1860, and soon after wrote the first American kindergarten textbook for teachers (Snyder, 1972). She understood that teachers needed to be trained in Froebel's philosophy to ensure the quality and integrity of the expanding kindergarten movement. She also traveled widely and became an outspoken advocate for the cause, inspiring new generations of leaders, the most influential of whom was Susan Blow.

Susan Blow's Leadership

Susan Blow (1843–1916) was the major voice in expanding the kindergarten movement and in fighting to keep it true to Froebel's original vision. Inspired by Elizabeth Peabody's promotion of kindergarten, Blow visited Froebelian kindergartens in the United States and Germany and became the leading interpreter of the approach at home.

Founding Public Kindergarten. In 1873, with the support of William Harris, a reform-minded school superintendent in St. Louis, Susan Blow founded the first public school kindergarten (Snyder, 1972) in response to Harris's concern that schooling did not begin until age 7. Blow was ambivalent about connecting kindergarten to public school, fearing that "the formality of the grades would seize kindergarten in its grip" (Snyder, 1972, p. 66). Nevertheless, she worked with Harris and launched more than 50 kindergarten classrooms. Teacher training was an essential part of her strategy, with teachers working with children in the mornings and attending lectures in the afternoons on topics such as the correct use of Froebel's gifts and occupations—a combination of theory and practicum that continues to this day in teacher education.

Upon Harris's departure from his post, a new school administration was less supportive of Blow's cause and threatened her ideal vision of kindergarten. Subsequently, Blow turned her energy from developing and spreading Froebelian kindergarten ideals to defending them (Snyder, 1972). Blow promoted a rigid application of Froebel's methods and materials (such as using the gifts in narrowly prescribed ways), which was actually antithetical to his vision of kindergarten.

Founding the International Kindergarten Union. In 1892, Blow convened a group of ardent kindergartners from throughout the country and formed the International Kindergarten Union (IKU). (Much later the IKU became the Association for Childhood Education International.) The original mission of the IKU was not just to disseminate information but also to protect the integrity of Froebelian kindergartens. Within two decades, this mission was to come into direct conflict with winds of change that were occurring in the wider educational world, emanating from the progressive education movement, described in the next section.

Progressive Education

The **progressive education movement** was a major effort to reform schooling at all levels to make it more democratic. Its tenets were in direct contrast to the prevailing practices in schools of the time, which emphasized rote memorization, strict conformity, and harsh discipline. The traditional curriculum was limited to the "3 Rs": reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The story of the progressive education movement in the United States is integrally connected to the story of the nursery school movement (or preschool, as we now call it). Many principles of developmentally appropriate practice are derived directly from the work of early progressive leaders. Although differences exist between the earlier ideas and current views, the commonalities between the two visions—progressive education and developmentally appropriate practice—are striking. The following sections present the contributions of John Dewey.

progressive education movement Major effort to reform schooling in the early 20th century to make it more democratic and responsive to children's needs. This movement was highly influential on early childhood education and later ideas about developmentally appropriate practice.



▶ This **video** shows how an integrated curriculum can be used effectively in the classroom. As you watch, consider the ways in which key elements of John Dewey’s educational approach have influenced early childhood education and continue to be implemented today.

John Dewey

John Dewey (1859–1952) was a professor of philosophy first at the University of Chicago and then for 47 years at Teachers College, Columbia University, in New York City. While in Chicago, John and his wife, Alice Chapman Dewey (d. 1927), founded the University of Chicago Laboratory School to implement their philosophy of a humane approach to education. Alice taught at the school, prepared the curriculum, and served as principal. The school, which they ran from 1893 to 1903, became a laboratory for developing and trying out their approach.

Principles of Progressive Education. John Dewey (1916) believed that the purpose of education is to ensure the effective functioning of a democratic society. He believed that the traditional approach to schooling could not produce citizen decision makers. He was concerned that in a democratic society, it is “impossible to foretell definitely what civilization will be twenty years from now” (Dewey, 1929, p. 6). Therefore, it is important to teach children to take initiative and use judgment. Dewey (1929) articulated his philosophy in *My Pedagogic Creed*. Let’s take a look at some of the principles of progressive education, as described by Dewey in that document.

What Education Is. “Education is the process of living and not preparation for future living” (Dewey, 1929, p. 7). This famous quote of John Dewey summarizes his definition of education and continues to influence early childhood education.

Dewey was a prolific writer whose words still inspire. The titles of his books alone convey his basic ideas about education: *Democracy and Education*, *Education and Experience*, *The School and Society*, *Freedom and Culture*, and *The Child and the Curriculum*. In Dewey’s mind, schooling could not be separated from the larger needs of democratic society, and children, rather than subject matter, needed to be at the center of the curriculum.

What the School Is. Dewey (1900) believed that the school should function as a community. The teacher’s role is to be a member of the community. Teachers should not directly impose discipline, but rather influence and assist children as they work together.

According to Dewey, teachers and parents should learn from each other—an accepted idea today, but radical for his time. In his school, parents and teachers met regularly to discuss topics such as why children should or should not learn to read at an early age—again, an issue that many educators and parents debate today (Wolfe, 2000).

What the Curriculum Is. Dewey believed that subject matter—reading, writing, geography, history, science—should be introduced to children in ways that they can understand and that involve them in social interaction. He introduced the idea of **integrated curriculum**, now a staple of early childhood education, which addresses learning goals across multiple subjects at the same time. For example, children might learn economics, history, geography, and other subjects by studying the workers in their neighborhood. A tenet of Dewey’s philosophy is that teachers should find ways to integrate traditional curriculum into topics of interest to children, such as building a model of the neighborhood. Dewey also brought expressive and constructive activities into the classroom such as cooking, sewing, and woodworking. He felt academic skills should grow out of these activities.

What Teaching Should Be. Dewey (1929) believed that the traditional emphasis on children as passive learners was a “waste of time.” He strongly emphasized the importance of teachers observing children and building on their interests. In progressive schools, the role of teachers is to guide or facilitate learning based on what they know about children and to choose the right problems and questions to further children’s learning. For example, teachers don’t simply teach geography as adults know it; rather, they teach the geography concepts and topics that the child is interested in and capable of learning. This approach, called the **child-centered curriculum**, has been falsely interpreted over

integrated curriculum

Learning plan that addresses goals across multiple areas of the curriculum at the same time.

child-centered

curriculum John Dewey’s idea that curriculum should reflect the concepts and topics that the child is interested in and capable of learning.



the years to mean that children determine the curriculum (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Although teachers build curriculum from children's experiences and interests, Dewey felt strongly that teachers needed to know *both* what children are interested in *and* the content that children needed to learn. This *both/and* thinking principle in progressive education has often been lost in translation.

The Impact of Progressive Education on Schooling. Although progressive education has often been misinterpreted and periodically comes under attack by proponents of more traditional practices, its contributions to American education are profound. Lois Meek Stoltz (1977), the first president of NAEYC and a contemporary of Dewey, eloquently captured the impact:

I think it is very difficult for people of this generation to realize, or even picture, what the public schools were like in the early 1900s. Children were in their seats all day long. When they rose, they rose to count, “1, 2, 3,” they then turned, marched, and went to the cloakroom. Then they did the same thing when they marched out of the school and when they marched in. Everybody read out of the same book at the same time. There was very little consideration for individual differences. (pp. 103–104)

In my opinion, the progressive education movement was the greatest force in America in improving public school education. . . . Much more attention to individual differences took place, and teachers began to let children use their own initiative, much more attention to problem solving and activity (pp. 108–109).

Earlier in this chapter, we talked about how solutions to problems contain the seeds of new problems. Progressive education was a case in point. Giving children more freedom meant that some people interpreted this as chaos, creating a backlash or a new problem. And yet, as Stoltz points out, the efforts overall led to real change in schools—and that change is progress.

Although he was a philosophy professor, Dewey was strongly influenced by the trend in his day toward more scientific approaches in education. This trend, called the *child study movement*, is described in the next section.

The Child Study Movement

As far back as Pestalozzi, educators understood that teaching should be based on direct study of children. Beginning in the late 19th century, G. Stanley Hall (1844–1924) launched the **child study movement**. Hall was interested in understanding individual differences in children through direct observation.

Hall's students went on to develop systematic scientific approaches to studying child development. Arnold Gesell (1880–1961) is famed for launching a child study laboratory at Yale University called the Gesell Institute. There he observed large samples of children and derived age-related norms for children's growth and development such as by what age children should take their first steps or speak their first words. These norms were considered “universal” and have been widely influential. However, in the late 20th century, Gesell's age-related norms were criticized for understating individual differences and not using diverse samples of children.

Hall was a strong critic of Froebelian kindergarten. He thought that its rigid methodology lacked a scientific basis. Thus, the child study movement played an important role in bringing about changes in the kindergarten movement, and it also contributed in large measure to the growing nursery school movement. We tell this story in the section that follows.

The Nursery School Movement

Dewey's laboratory school and his emphasis on child observation reflected his understanding of the need to base education on the study of children. Similarly, other universities launched lab schools to train teachers and study children. Many of these schools

child study movement Early 20th century effort to scientifically observe and systematically document children's individual development under the leadership of G. Stanley Hall and Arnold Gesell.



served children younger than kindergarten age, and were called **nursery schools**, based on their philosophy of nurturing development. Laboratory schools were established for the purposes of research and demonstration of teaching methods, rather than to serve parents or neglected children (Hewes et al., 2001). As a result, many of these programs served middle- and upper-class children of faculty or community members.

The nursery school movement eventually launched the wider field of early childhood education. It grew out of the kindergarten and child study movements through the leadership of two women whose contributions to early childhood education are unparalleled: Patty Smith Hill, founder of NAEYC, and Lucy Sprague Mitchell, founder of Bank Street College. Every early childhood educator should know the stories of these women and their contemporaries, who played seminal roles in laying the foundation of early childhood education as we know it today. We who follow are their direct descendants.

Patty Smith Hill

Patty Smith Hill's life story parallels the early history of early childhood education, with each phase of her life connected to important developments in the field. She was a joyful child, teacher of young children, creator of resources for children, teacher educator, and national leader.

Hill's Early Life Experiences. Patty Smith Hill (1868–1946) had an idyllic childhood. Her father believed that girls should be educated, a radical idea at the time. Her mother was a progressive thinker who had secretly, and also illegally, taught enslaved people to read, write, and calculate (Wolfe, 2000). Furthermore, Patty Hill's mother believed that play was essential to childhood.

Work as a Kindergarten Teacher. By the 1880s, the kindergarten movement was under way and Anna Bryan launched a teacher training program in Louisville, Kentucky, where Patty Hill became one of the first students (Snyder, 1972). Hill started her own kindergarten where she encouraged creative uses for Froebel's gifts as toys, and constructive materials such as blocks and clay. Her kindergarten evidenced her belief in the value of children's play as a way to learn.

In 1896, Patty Hill and Anna Bryan were among a group of influential kindergarten educators who attended one of G. Stanley Hall's lectures on new knowledge and insights gained from the systematic study of children's development. Hall's severe criticism of the Froebelian approach as unscientific outraged the attendees, all of whom stormed out of the meeting—with the exception of Hill and Bryan (Hewes, 1976). They stayed and continued to study with Hall, and they developed a new curriculum for teaching young children.

In 1903, Louisville's kindergartens became part of the public schools. Patty Hill was excited about the potential benefits, but feared that key kindergarten practices, including parent education, would be lost (Snyder, 1972). Patty Hill's vision for kindergarten included three purposes (Hill, [1926]1987):

1. The most imperative function is “to minister to the nature and needs of children from 4 to 6 years of age.”
2. The kindergarten teacher's second duty is to see the relation of her work to the first-grade curriculum and lay the foundation that children need “without sacrificing the right of the kindergarten child to free, full development on his own level.”
3. The third function is to connect kindergarten to the home, to reduce the gap between the two, and to build on the learning that takes place there. (p. 12)

This vision of kindergarten, especially the role of parents, was not just ahead of Hill's time, but one to aspire to today.

nursery schools Schools serving children younger than kindergarten age; out-of-date term for pre-school or prekindergarten.



Creator of Resources for Children. Patty Hill developed resources for children, including a set of lumberlike wooden blocks from which children could build structures large enough for them to play in. She and her musician sister, Mildred, wrote songs for children, using music as a teaching tool. Their most famous song is *Happy Birthday*, although few people know its composers.

Hill also wrote many poems about children's interests as well as books to help children learn to read. Much like her mother, Hill was concerned about racial inequality. In the early 1940s, she worked for months on a set of readers showing "fine-looking Negro and dark-skinned" children, but she despaired when no publisher would consider them (Hewes, 1976). She believed that respectful images would help resolve racial prejudices.

Hill's Work as a Teacher Educator. In 1905, Patty Smith Hill joined the faculty of Teachers College in New York, where she stayed for 30 years and was considered a master teacher (Snyder, 1972). She focused her work in the community school, which served poor children, as opposed to the campus lab school, which served well-off children of faculty.

The Dean of Teachers College, James Earl Russell, was famous for bringing together divergent points of view (Snyder, 1972). One of his provocative ideas was to bring Susan Blow to coteach a course on kindergarten methods with Patty Hill. Among the topics they debated were opposing views of work and play. Although students loved their lively debates, eventually it became clear that Hill's point of view was carrying the day (Snyder, 1972).

Hill's Contributions as a National Leader. Patty Hill was active in the IKU and served as its president. However, her more liberal ideas about kindergarten methods, including her promotion of play and creativity, came into conflict with others' more rigid interpretations of Froebel's ideas.

In 1904, the IKU formed the Committee of Nineteen, a group with varying perspectives on kindergarten practice, to resolve disputes on topics such as the role of play and the curriculum (Wolfe, 2000). Each year the committee issued a report, and disagreements became more apparent over time. By 1909, differences could not be resolved and three reports were produced: one by Susan Blow, another one by Patty Smith Hill, and a compromise report by Lucy Wheelock (Snyder, 1972). Patty Hill's report was to become the vision for early childhood practice as we know it today. Nevertheless, the process of debating conflicting points of view, which she embraced, continues to be an essential part of the work of early childhood educators (Bredenkamp, 2001).

Founder of NAEYC. As nursery schools began to proliferate in the 1920s, Hill was concerned about the lack of standards and curriculum and the threat of unqualified people taking leadership positions (Hewes, 1976). In 1926, she formed the National Committee on Nursery Schools, which became the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE). The committee included Lois Meek Stoltz, Arnold Gesell, and Abigail Eliot. Stoltz became the first president.

In the 1960s, NANE changed its name to NAEYC, the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Patty Hill was its first member and her views dominated the work of the nursery school movement during its early years. NANE's first publication in 1929 was *Minimum Essentials for Nursery School Education*. In this tradition, NAEYC has been involved in setting standards ever since (Bredenkamp, 2001).

We have chosen to tell the story of Patty Smith Hill in such detail because she lived so many of the historical events that helped define present-day early childhood education. In the next section, we share the story of one of her close colleagues working in progressive education, Caroline Pratt.

Caroline Pratt

Caroline Pratt (1867–1954) attended the kindergarten education program at Teachers College. Like Hill, Pratt rejected the Froebelian kindergarten curriculum. She believed that it was far too structured and did not allow children to play freely or experiment with materials.



Caroline Pratt's invention of wooden unit blocks was a major contribution that countless children have enjoyed and benefited from ever since. Research continues to uncover new and lasting learning benefits of block play.

Pratt's Educational Philosophy. Pratt focused her energies on studying children directly. Her motto, as well as the title of the book for which she is best known, was "I learn from children" (Wolfe, 2000). She became intrigued by the potential of engaging children with open-ended play equipment and materials.

Like others in the progressive education movement, Pratt looked to education to transform society and worked in settlement houses with poor children. She set up classrooms with her own hand-made blocks and toys, crayons, and paper and observed children's play. Based on her observations, Pratt realized the benefits for children of firsthand experiences and self-directed plans, field trips and pretend play, letting children find answers to their own questions, the relationship of play and intelligence, and the need to nurture children's play (Wolfe, 2000). Pratt also saw an active role for teachers in supporting children's play. These conclusions have all been supported by empirical research in the intervening years.

Inventor of Unit Blocks. Caroline Pratt's most lasting contribution is undoubtedly her design of wooden unit blocks. She admired Patty Hill's blocks but found them difficult for younger children to manipulate. She wanted blocks that would allow children to openly express their ideas about the world. Her blocks are made of natural hardwood, in various three-dimensional shapes, and mathematically precise because each block is a fraction or multiple of the standard unit. For example, the standard unit block is one-half of the next size block, one-quarter of the size after that, and so forth. What Pratt intuitively believed about the value of these tools for children's learning has been proven true by research. For a summary of these benefits of block play, read the *What Works: Developing Mathematical Skills with Unit Blocks* feature.

Pratt created wooden people representing families and community workers to add a pretend element to the block play. She also designed large hollow wooden blocks to encourage large muscle play and for outdoor use. For more than a century, millions of children have enjoyed and learned from these wonderful, creative materials. However, because she did not patent them, Pratt never benefited financially.

One of Pratt's closest colleagues was Lucy Sprague Mitchell. Mitchell's enormous contributions to the field are described in the next section.

Lucy Sprague Mitchell

Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1878–1967) has been identified as a major link between Dewey's progressive education movement of the early 20th century and NAEYC's current concept of high-quality, developmentally appropriate education (Greenberg, 1987). Indeed, her life spanned the period from the beginning of John Dewey's work to the birth of Head Start in 1965. In the sections that follow, we describe her early life, educational experiments and her ideas about curriculum, and the important role of Bank Street College, which she founded.

Mitchell's Early Years. Lucy Sprague Mitchell was a brilliant woman who studied at Teachers College with John Dewey and Edward Thorndike, the father of educational measurement and statistical research. Her life's work drew on both of these influences—a progressive philosophy combined with research-based practice.



What Works

Developing Mathematical Skills with Unit Blocks

Terence and Sam are building tracks for their subway train. “It isn’t finished,” Terence says. “Let’s make the dark part where it’s got a roof [the underground].” He starts to lay blocks along the side and then a roof.

“Wait, that’s not going to work,” Sam worries. “The subway cars can’t get in. We need to make it higher for them.”

After some trial and error, the boys use taller blocks for the tunnel sides, add a roof and run the train underneath, shouting, “Yay, we did it!”

The wooden unit blocks Terence and Sam are using are among the most popular and highly regarded play and learning materials for young children. In the early 1900s, when teacher Caroline Pratt designed these blocks—called *unit blocks* because each block is a fraction or multiple of the standard unit—she was most interested in providing open-ended tools to promote children’s creative play. But many learning possibilities emerged. As children built with the blocks, they developed their fine motor skills; measured blocks and classified them by size and shape; explored symmetry, balance, and stability; discovered the mathematical relationships among the blocks (e.g., two small blocks equal one longer block); engaged in pretend play; worked and solved problems together; and did many other things that would contribute to their development and give them hours of pleasure.

Today, researchers agree that unit blocks are indeed valuable learning materials. Because of the spatial and mathematical relationships that exist between the types of unit blocks,

researchers studying children’s math development and learning have been particularly interested in the effects of block play. Young children’s spontaneous activities with blocks do in fact include mathematical play and exploration of spatial relationships. Research suggests that benefits from block play persist over the years.

Evidence also indicates that teachers make a difference in the complexity level of children’s constructions and the outcomes of their block play. Children’s block structures are more complex when teachers talk with children during their play, saying, for example, “What would happen if...?” or “Sometimes people use a block to join a structure...” And children are especially likely to develop math concepts in block play if teachers introduce math vocabulary and engage children in mathematical thinking related to their play. For example, the teacher might comment, “For your wall you have the blocks standing on their thin edge” or “Hmm, you’ve run out of the long blocks for your road. What can you do ... and how many will you need?” When teachers give voice to thought and extend children’s thinking, they enhance the learning potential of an already valuable and much-loved learning material—unit blocks.

Source: Based on *Mathematics Learning in Early Childhood: Paths Toward Excellence and Equity*, by C. T. Cross, T. A. Woods, & H. Schweingruber (Eds.), Committee on Early Childhood Mathematics, and National Research Council, 2009, Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

The Bureau of Educational Experiments. In 1916, using inherited funds, Mitchell launched the Bureau of Educational Experiments (B.E.E.) to teach teachers and conduct research. The goals of the Bureau of Educational Experiments (Wolfe, 2000) were to:

- Focus on child development rather than learning specific curriculum
- Take a whole-child approach to learning and development
- Observe how children’s development is stimulated by experiences and activities
- Focus on scientific measurement of stages of development and establishing norms (representing the influence of Arnold Gesell as well as Thorndike).

Bank Street College. When the bureau moved to 69 Bank Street, its name was changed to Bank Street College of Education. A graduate program in teacher education, Bank Street College played essential roles in the history of early childhood education and continues to do so. We can only mention a few here. Most notably, Mitchell’s educational philosophy emphasized children’s firsthand experiences and play. Her ideas came to be called the **Bank Street approach**. In this model, children’s experiences in the “here and now” provide the launching pad for their learning. These experiences, such as the field trips or projects described earlier, gradually widen children’s horizons beyond the here and now. The concept is that curriculum should be based on individual children’s

Bank Street approach Originating with Lucy Sprague Mitchell at Bank Street College, a curriculum framework based on individual children’s development, emphasizing that learning begins in children’s experiences in the immediate environment (here and now).



development, and that learning occurs through interaction with the environment and other people (Mitchell & David, 1992). The Bank Street approach has been widely influential in early childhood curriculum development, especially in teaching social studies.

One element of the Bank Street approach that has sometimes been underemphasized is the role of the teacher. In Mitchell's words, "We were looking at children learning, and *intentionally* facilitating the process every day" (Greenberg, 1987, p. 75). Read the feature *Becoming an Intentional Teacher: Expanding Children's Experience* for an example of the teacher's role in the Bank Street approach.

The Writer's Workshops for Children's Authors. Mitchell herself was a prolific writer and authored a series of children's books. She created a writer's workshop for authors of children's books at Bank Street in 1937, which offered scholarships to ensure racial and socioeconomic diversity. The writer's laboratory was established to help authors better understand children's development and interests, and to promote their use of the rhythms and rhymes of language that are so important and enjoyable for children (Wolfe, 2000). Among the best-known writers who participated in the workshop were Margaret Wise Brown and Ruth Krauss. Brown's books *Goodnight Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny* remain classics, as does *The Carrot Seed* by Krauss.

Near the end of Lucy Sprague Mitchell's life, she was instrumental in numerous national efforts to expand early childhood education beyond laboratory schools and use it for true social reform. She lived to see the Bank Street approach used as the model for the Head Start program. Head Start is also known for its emphasis on parent involvement, which was another part of the nursery school movement, described in the next section.

Parent Cooperative Preschools

As early as 1916, parents organized to start their own nursery schools. In these programs, which are called *parent cooperatives* or *co-ops*, the parents "own" and administer the program. They hire a teacher and take turns volunteering in the classroom as a second staff member. Most parent co-ops throughout the 20th century used a play-based, progressive education-influenced approach.

The number of parent cooperative nursery schools grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s, and through the leadership of Katherine Whiteside Taylor an association was formed, Parent Cooperative Preschools International (www.preschools.coop.org). In recent years, the number of parent cooperative preschools has declined due to the increase of mothers in the workforce. Nevertheless, the movement reinforced the integral role of parents in early childhood education.

In the previous sections, we discussed the interconnected stories of the kindergarten, progressive education, and nursery school movements. Many more outstanding leaders contributed to these efforts than we can describe here. Table 2.1 on pages 37–39 is designed to fill in the chronology.

In the next section, we turn to the parallel story of the child care movement.

The Child Care Movement

The history of child care in the United States followed a different path from that of kindergarten and preschool. To summarize, kindergartens and preschools grew out of child study, focused on middle-class children, and were associated with education and development. By contrast, child care grew out of social welfare efforts for poor families and focused on the need to support working parents. Consequently, child care became associated with physical care rather than education.

In the later part of the 20th century and into the 21st century, these differences have become less distinct. However, these histories still play out in public policy and attitudes. For example, federal child care funding is part of public assistance for needy families, whereas prekindergarten support comes from state education agencies. In the sections



Becoming an Intentional Teacher

Expanding Children's Experience

Here's What Happened The preschool I work in uses the Bank Street curriculum approach. I was planning to do some cooking with my 4-year-old class, so I wanted them to learn more about where foods come from. In our urban neighborhood, most children have limited experience with growing things; however, there is a community garden that a few of the families participate in, and those children are involved with planting, watching things grow, and eating the produce. In talking with the "garden families" to find out what they grow and what the children do in the garden, I found that the parents were eager to send in a tomato or zucchini from their gardens for the class to see and taste. We did that first, and then made a trip to the garden. After the trip, I encouraged the children to draw and write about what they had seen, and I brought in library books like *The Carrot Seed* (Krauss, 1945) and *Whose Garden Is It?* (Hoberrman, 2004) to share with them.

Here's What I Was Thinking When children have little experience with growing things, they eat fruits, vegetables,

and other foods without understanding where they come from. Even if an adult tells them, "Tomatoes come from the ground," it doesn't compute. There's a gulf between their experience and what someone tells them or shows them in a book, and this gulf limits their understanding, interest, and willingness to try new foods. Part of what should be happening in preschool, and later in school, is bridging this gulf, and sometimes the best way to do that is with direct, hands-on experience. Other children in the group may know about gardening and growing things but haven't seen pictures representing them or read stories about them, so providing that experience is valuable in the early childhood classroom too.

Reflection Many public school kindergartens today are given a curriculum that prescribes certain topics of study such as weather or animals. If you were a teacher in such a situation, how could you apply the principles of the Bank Street approach to make the experiences more meaningful?

that follow, we describe some of the key events and people involved in the history of the child care movement.

McMillan Sisters

Margaret McMillan (1860–1931) and Rachel McMillan (1859–1917) worked to improve the lives of young children in London and North America during the early 20th century. The purpose of their work was to offer children a temporary alternative to the dreadful living conditions in the London slums, which severely damaged the health of most poor children. Accordingly, they set up a health clinic, a nursery school (they coined the phrase) for children under age 5, and teacher training.

The McMillan sisters developed a model open-air nursery that was unique in emphasizing outdoor play, nutritious food, cleanliness, and rest to promote healthy development. The program was also educational. These centers for working families were called **day nurseries**—the forerunner of present-day child care centers.

The McMillan sisters' work was influential in the United States. Several Americans studied with them in England, including Abigail Eliot (1892–1992), who subsequently imported many of their ideas and founded one of the first nursery schools in the United States in 1922.

As always happens, events in the larger context had a major impact on early childhood education and particularly on the history of child care. These included the Great Depression and World War II.

Works Progress Administration Nurseries

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was established to address the high unemployment rate (25%) and to build needed public works throughout the country. One of the WPA programs established in 1933 was the Federal Emergency Relief Nursery Schools. The purpose of the **WPA nurseries**, which were open from 9 AM to 5 PM, was to support the economy by providing jobs for those

day nurseries Programs designed to serve working families in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; the forerunner of present-day child care centers.

WPA nurseries Federal emergency relief nursery schools, funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Great Depression, designed to support the economy by providing jobs for those who worked on the site and child care services to families seeking work.



who worked on the site and child care to families seeking work (Nourot, 2005). Like the day nurseries of the McMillan sisters, WPA centers focused on promoting physical care and healthy living habits (Nourot, 2005). But in contrast to the McMillan sisters' vision, most WPA centers did not emphasize education.

The WPA nurseries had both positive and negative effects on early childhood education. Because day nurseries served children from poor families, the idea of expanding nursery education to all children was born (Nourot, 2005). However, the rapid expansion of WPA nursery schools meant that teachers were hired with minimal training. This cycle of expanding services without attention to ensuring qualified staff has plagued the child care field throughout its existence. As the Depression ended, so too did the WPA nursery schools. But a major national crisis—World War II—followed shortly, leading to another important chapter in the history of child care.

The Lanham Act

World War II necessitated full deployment of not only men into the armed services but also women into the workplace to replace the men and support industry. This massive workforce shift required immediate child care assistance, which the federal government provided in the form of the **Lanham Act**. This legislation funded emergency work-site child care centers, which operated for 10 to 12 hours per day.

One of the most famous centers was located at the Kaiser Shipbuilding company in Oregon (MacKenzie, 2011). Kaiser was the largest of the Lanham Act centers, operating 24 hours a day all year long. Lois Meek Stoltz was the director, and the manager was Jimmy Hymes, who later became a professor and president of NAEYC. The program, still considered a model, provided health services and nutritious meals for children and mothers, parent education, teacher training, and a play-based educational experience for children.

As happened with the WPA nurseries, the Lanham Act centers ended along with the war. Child care was no longer supported because mothers left the workforce as fathers reentered it. These high-quality centers remain an ideal for working families; yet it wasn't until the 1980s that employer-sponsored child care again became a major sector of the early childhood field.

The stories related thus far of the kindergarten, nursery school, and child care movements were lived and recorded by members of the majority group—white, European Americans. However, various groups of Americans were also part of these stories and have made significant contributions to the history of early childhood education, which we discuss in the next section.

▲ A Wider View of Early Childhood History

History is written by those who gain the largest amount of power. It is important to note that the previous discussion is dominated by white European Americans because they were the individuals with the most power in the society and their work is most often included in the “official” written history of the field. At the same time, however, parallel stories were occurring among the many groups that populated the United States. That history is less well known primarily because historical sources are scarce, but also because there is a strong oral rather than written tradition in these communities (Simpson, n.d.).

These stories deserve our attention and respect because they also have made the field of early childhood education what it is today. Here we briefly describe historical events and contributions from the perspective of African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans. It is essential to point out that there is huge diversity within these population groups. In fact, they are hardly groups at all except as designated by the United States Census Bureau. To further understand history from an even wider view, read the accompanying *Culture Lens: Early Childhood Education Through the Lens of Non-Western Culture* feature.

Lanham Act Federal legislation to provide emergency child care and other services for families employed in the war effort during World War II.



African Americans in Early Childhood History

Throughout U.S. history, African Americans have been denied power beginning with slavery, when it was illegal to teach enslaved people to read and write, much less attend school. Once schooling became available, it was legally segregated by race until the 1954 Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision banned the practice. But even after desegregation became the law of the land, equal rights and equal educational opportunity for all racial groups were still denied.

Over the centuries of enslavement, a few formal, mostly religious schools provided education for African American children (Cunningham & Osborn, 1979). By the 1830s, however, such schools were prohibited. Educating enslaved people was a clandestine and dangerous operation, requiring courage on the part of teachers as well as students. We saw earlier how Patty Smith Hill's mother was one of those who took that risk and what its effects were on her daughter's life choices thereafter.

African American Kindergartens and Teacher Training

After the Civil War, education became the vehicle for advancement of African Americans, propelled by national leaders such as Mary McLeod Bethune (1875–1955), who founded Bethune-Cookman College in 1904, and became an effective voice for civil rights and equal educational opportunity. Between 1865 and 1890, prominent African American institutions of higher education were founded such as Howard University (1867), Hampton University (1868), Tuskegee University (1881), and Spelman College (1881). These and other historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) made important contributions to the study of child development, then usually housed in Home Economics departments (C. E. Cunningham & Osborn, 1979).

Early childhood education was seen as an important foundation for future advancement. Many HBCUs operated teacher education programs and laboratory schools (Osborn, 1991). These programs reflected the prevailing philosophies of Pestalozzi, Froebel, and later Dewey and G. Stanley Hall. By 1873, Hampton Institute (now University) in Virginia had a kindergarten teacher-training program and a children's school that was influenced by Montessori's ideas about children learning practical skills (C. E. Cunningham & Osborn, 1979). Tuskegee in Alabama offered training for parents in child-rearing methods. In the early 1900s, Howard University, in Washington, D.C., awarded degrees in kindergarten education, and Atlanta University operated a Froebelian kindergarten and an elementary and high school for African American students (J. E. Hale, personal communication, February 2009).

The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was founded in 1896. Its first president, Mary Church Terrell (1863–1954), was the daughter of enslaved parents and one of the first African American women to earn a college degree and later a master's. She was a strong supporter of early childhood education. Under her leadership, the NACW helped establish kindergartens for African American children throughout the country (C. E. Cunningham & Osborn, 1979).

African Americans and the Nursery School Movement

In 1927, five years after Abigail Eliot started the first nursery school in the United States, Dorothy Howard founded the "first Black nursery school" in Washington, D.C., to serve professional families. She operated the school for more than 50 years (Simpson, n.d., p. 262). Spelman College in Atlanta opened the first laboratory school in an African American college in 1930, under the direction of

Historically Black Colleges and Universities have played important roles in the study of child development and the education of future generations of teachers. Although not well-known, the contributions of African American early childhood educators have been significant in the field's history.



Culture Lens

Early Childhood Education Through the Lens of Non-Western Culture



Ideas from non-Western, alternative histories have much to offer early childhood education practices. One contemporary scholar who has written of diverse cultural approaches to educating children is Timothy Reagan (2005). He studies views from Africa, the Aztecs, North American Indians, the Rom, Chinese Confucians, Indian Hindus and Buddhists, and Islamic traditions.

Consider the African culture in which child-rearing practices and education are based on African people's view of the relationship between the physical and spiritual reality (Mbiti, 1992). They believe that understanding children requires understanding their spiritual purpose. Before a child is born, the child is a complete spirit—in some traditions, the child is an ancestor returning. At birth, children are celebrated and the community is expected to make room for this child's purpose in the community. Because the spirit has come home to a community, not just to a biological set of parents, it becomes a community responsibility to take care of this child (Bunseki Fu-Kiai & Lukondo-Wamba, 1988; Some, 1999).

According to Dr. Itihari Toure (C. B. Day, personal communication, December 2008):

The view of the spirit returning for the sake of the community also informs the responsibilities for the child. Child rearing is a collective process and children in different traditions not only have specific family responsibilities but partake in various community traditions as they must retain and transmit the values of the specific community. Biological parents and community

members take care of all children. Exposure to various crafts and skills needed for the community to thrive, songs and dances that represent various stages of life, and the countless stories that recall the history of the people are part of the child-rearing experience. . . . When children engage in formal schooling, the motivation is not based on personal achievement alone; there is a desire to bring pride and regard to the community through the personal achievement. This perception of purpose and success comes from a consistent socialization about the value of one's family and community interdependent with the value of oneself. It is often referred to as *Ubunutu* (I am because we are; we are because I am).

Understanding how other cultures rear children brings to light a very important consideration for all educators: **Every child is a product of his or her own history. Knowing that other cultures rear their children according to non-Western beliefs deepens and broadens the possibilities for educating children to their full potential, in ways that may resonate with their own historical and cultural realities.**

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Pearlie Reed (C. E. Cunningham & Osborn, 1979). This school used the “whole-child” philosophy of the larger nursery school movement. Still in operation, the school is named for Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, the nation's premier children's advocacy organization (www.spelman.edu).

From 1929 to 1969, Oneida Cockrell (1900–1970) directed the Rosenwald-Garden Apartment Nursery School and Kindergarten in Chicago (Simpson, n.d.). This program became a model for children's centers in urban apartment dwellings, and also served children with disabilities early on. Cockrell participated in the White House Conference on Children and Youth in 1950. Cockrell also taught at the University of Chicago laboratory school.

Spelman College produced many future early childhood luminaries. Its first graduate student, Ida Jones Curry, became head of teacher training at Hampton Institute in 1932 (C. E. Cunningham & Osborn, 1979). Curry worked with the McMillan sisters for a time in London, and was a leader in NANE.

Among Curry's students at Hampton was Evangeline Ward (1920–1985), who made significant contributions to the field (Simpson, n.d.). Ward was president of NAEYC from



1970 to 1974, and not only was she the first African American president of the organization but also the only president ever to serve two terms. In the mid-1970s, Ward (1977) was the first to take on the challenge of developing a code of ethics for the profession. She was also the first executive director of the Child Development Associate (CDA) national credentialing program.

Many other African American early childhood leaders played major roles in the field's history. Space does not permit citing all of their accomplishments. At a time when their educational opportunity was severely limited, these professionals overcame huge obstacles to earn doctoral degrees at major national and international universities, to educate and mentor future generations of teachers, and to voluntarily serve in professional organizations. The harvest of their work is still being reaped, but was essential as the field expanded tremendously.

Native American Early Childhood History

The native population of this country is highly diverse within and among various tribes—each with its own cultural traditions, identity, and languages—and encompassing American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. Today, almost half of Native Americans live in urban areas rather than on reservations. However, the history of oppression, broken treaties, and removal from native lands has had a uniformly devastating impact on our indigenous population.

Schooling for Indian Children

Historically, education was part of the government's strategy of oppression and control. For example, in the 19th century, children were often removed from the reservation to attend boarding schools in which they were not allowed to wear native dress, speak their language, or practice their cultural traditions (Wortham, 2002). Schools were also established on reservations but controlled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs with the goal of assimilating native peoples into the larger society and thus suppressing their cultural identity (Wortham, 2002). Surprisingly, one exception was William N. Hailmann, Superintendent of Indian Schools both on and off reservations from 1894 to 1898, who tried to implement Froebel's ideas and methods and introduced kindergarten teacher training (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

In 1928, a government investigation resulted in the Meriam Report, which concluded that previous policies toward Indians had been detrimental to their health, social, and economic well-being. The report led to a shift in Indian education toward more progressive practices—connecting education to family and the values of the community, and to relevant skills and knowledge (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). However, schooling continued to be mostly segregated and inferior.

Federal legislation between 1965 and 1978 brought about significant change in the education of Indian children. Funds became available to public schools to better meet their needs and to provide bilingual education, enabling transmission of the culture and preservation of the languages, many of which were becoming extinct. In 1972, the Office of Indian Education of the U.S. Department of Education was established. Regulations began to require that parents and tribal leaders be involved in setting policies.

American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start

Head Start had a major impact on Native communities, bringing more emphasis on early education and comprehensive services. For example, Head Start played a significant role in ensuring that Indian children with disabilities receive intervention (T. Dobrec, personal communication, August 2, 2011). Dr. James Wilson, an Ogalala Sioux, worked with tribal leaders to get them to accept programs on reservations (T. Dobrec, personal communication, August 2, 2011).



Today, American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start programs are located in 26 states (Marks & Graham, 2004). Promoting home language and cultural identity are key goals of families and tribal leaders. Some, like the Cherokee nation, are committed to tribal language preservation, and many Pueblos have teachers who are fluent in the tribal language. But generally, language preservation is a challenge because in many situations only a few tribal elders still speak the language, and there is no written form. Head Start and private foundations such as Kellogg have been instrumental in expanding early childhood teacher preparation by providing grants to tribal colleges.

Native American Early Childhood Leaders

The field and Native American children and families have benefited from the contributions of many key leaders. One who was particularly important in higher education was Alice Paul (1930–2005). A lifelong educator in Tucson, she was the first Tohono O’odham woman to receive a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona. She served on the faculty of the University of Arizona from 1986 through 1999 and became head of Teaching and Teacher Education. Paul helped create the Tohono O’odham Community College and served on the Board of NAEYC in the 1990s.

Winona Sample (1917–2008), another important role model and national leader, was involved with Head Start from its beginning. Born on the Redlake Chippewa reservation in Minnesota, Sample had to go away to school like many Indian children. She became director of a large Head Start program and eventually head of Indian Health Services for the State of California. She, too, served on the NAEYC Board. In her own words, “The highlight of my life was being selected as the vice chair of the International Year of the Child (1979–1980)” (Neugebauer, 1995, p. 57).

Helen Scheirbeck (1935–2010) has been described as one of the 20th century’s most significant American Indian leaders. She was an untiring advocate for American Indian civil rights, Indian children and families, Indian control of their own education, and the sovereignty of her Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. She served as director of the Office of Indian Education, where she led efforts to pass the Indian Education Act of 1975. She was the head of the Indian Head Start Program beginning in 1991. Notably, Scheirbeck was a member of the first Board of Trustees of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC, for which she planned museum exhibitions, cultural arts programs, and educational materials.

Latino Early Childhood History

As with African Americans and Native Americans, the history of early education among Latinos has involved social injustices and shifting political winds. We use the term *Latino* to describe a highly diverse population of children and families with countries of origin including Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and various Latin and South American nations. Despite recent controversies surrounding immigration, most Latinos in the United States are American citizens and were born here.

In this brief overview of history from a Latino perspective, we address the two most significant influences: bilingual education in the K–12 sector and the history of dual language programming in preschool and Head Start. Of course, the topic of bilingual education is relevant to hundreds of language groups in this country, but we discuss it here because the Spanish-speaking population of children is by far the largest group. Only Mexico has a larger population of Spanish speakers than the United States (Rumbaut, 2006). Also the issue of bilingual education is central to the history of early education from a Latino perspective.

K–12 Bilingual Education

Perhaps because the U.S. has always been a nation of immigrants, bilingual education has always been an issue. As far back as the colonial era, German, French, and Scandinavian



immigrants provided bilingual schools (Cerda & Hernandez, 2006). In the 1870s, William Harris, the Superintendent of Schools in St. Louis who helped Susan Blow found the first public kindergarten, also founded the first kindergarten taught in German to help immigrant children get a “head start” on their education (Cerda & Hernandez, 2006). By the 1920s, however, most bilingual schools were abolished and children were expected to learn only English.

Modern bilingual programs began in the 1960s. The first two-way immersion program (taught in both Spanish and English) was established in Miami in 1963. Several important court cases in the 1970s, such as the *Lau vs. Nichols* decision in California and *Aspira vs. the City of New York* on behalf of Puerto Rican children, established that meeting linguistic and cultural needs, including providing bilingual education, was essential for children to have equal educational opportunity.

The federal government has played an important albeit changing policy-setting role in this history. Consider how names have changed in the U.S. Department of Education over time. In 1973 the Office of Bilingual Education was established to implement the first national Bilingual Education Act. From 1980 to 1995, the agency was called Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA). Eugene Garcia, a highly respected scholar and advocate for early childhood education, was a director of the agency. Another important early childhood advocate, Delia Pompa also led the agency and is now the Executive Director of National Council of La Raza. OBEMLA’s mission included helping school districts serve “limited English proficient” children (sadly called LEPs) and administering provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that included serving preschool children.

In the 1990s, bilingual programs came under attack as not effective and voters succeeded in banning them in California, Massachusetts, and Arizona. Emblematic of this political shift, OBEMLA was renamed the Office of English Language Acquisition. Many more states now have English-only laws for K–12 schools. These laws have not yet been applied to preschool programs but certainly have an effect on how and by whom children are taught. Despite research in support of dual language programs, strong public sentiment against them prevails. In the words of Antonia Lopez, Early Childhood Director at the National Council of La Raza: “The history of Latinos in early childhood education is tied into the history of not being seen as fully fledged Americans” (A. Lopez, personal communication, March 30, 2012).

Preschool Level

A slightly brighter picture of Latino history has prevailed at the preschool level, with Head Start leading the way from its earliest days in support of children and families who speak languages other than English. In 1972, *The Head Start Program Performance Standards* required that programs help each child build cultural identity and that staff speak the primary language of the children and are knowledgeable about their culture. As part of the *Strategy for Spanish-Speaking Children* in the 1970s, Head Start funded development and dissemination of four Bilingual and Bicultural Curriculum Models. These models provided an important foundation on which subsequent curricula and professional development have been built.

In 1982, the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential Bilingual Specialization was established for candidates who have a working knowledge of two languages and to provide more well-prepared staff to work with dual-language learners. In 1991, *Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs* were developed by a cadre of professionals such as Yolanda Garcia, who provided training on the four multicultural curricula. In 1996 they were incorporated into the revision of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*. For decades, Head Start has served migrant and seasonal workers, most of whom now are Spanish-speaking, which has stimulated much of the Bureau’s work on linguistically and culturally responsive resources.



American schools have always served large numbers of children who speak a language other than English at home. Every early childhood teacher needs to know and use effective strategies to teach dual language learners.

Latina Early Childhood Leadership

As we have seen throughout this chapter, history is primarily the story of how people impact organizations. The efforts of a small but committed group of leaders brought about real change within the early childhood establishment. Leaders such as Antonia Lopez, Amie Beckett, Mary Margarita Contie, Lily Wong Fillmore, Lourdes Diaz Soto, and Marlene Zepeda launched the Early Childhood Interest Group of the National Association of Bilingual Education. A handful of people attended its first meeting, but before long more than 400 people flocked to their sessions (A. Lopez, personal communication, March 30, 2012). These advocates were joined by many others, including Governing Board member Rebeca Barrera, to influence policy within NAEYC. As a result, in 1995, the association adopted a position statement, *Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity*, and also significantly revised its position statement on developmentally appropriate practice to reflect their input.

In widening the lens on the history of early childhood education to include the perspective of African Americans, Native Americans, and Latino Americans, it is apparent that Head Start has played a key role in providing services for these populations of children and families. We conclude by describing how Head Start wound all the various strands of early childhood history together.

▲ Bringing the Stories Together

The separate stories described previously continue to influence early education today. For example, we struggle with the large gap between preschool practices and what follows in kindergarten and primary grades. Similarly, child care and preschool continue to be divided in terms of standards, funding, and populations they serve. But over time, the stories began to converge, most notably in the national Head Start program.

The Story of Head Start

The harvest of the work of diverse leaders in the past is still being reaped, but was essential as the field expanded exponentially with the launch of Head Start in the mid-1960s, which brought together the strands of early childhood history. The Civil Rights movement of the 1960s brought about real change in virtually every aspect of society. Early childhood education was no exception. In response to the call for equal opportunity in this country, President Lyndon Johnson launched the War on Poverty. One of the cornerstones of this far-reaching effort, and the only one that still exists, was the Head Start program. Head Start represents a coming together of the nursery school movement, which had previously served middle-class families, and the child care movement, which originated to serve the indigent and working poor. The following sections describe how the key elements of Head Start reflect the lessons learned from early childhood history.

▶ This [video](#) shows a quality Head Start program. How does Head Start today reflect the lessons learned from early childhood history?



A Comprehensive Program

Just like Patty Smith Hill, Maria Montessori, the McMillan sisters, and so many others, the framers of Head Start believed in serving the whole child. Early childhood education has long been a multidisciplinary field. Head Start reflects this history as a comprehensive program providing health, mental health, social services, and parent involvement, in addition to education.

Head Start was also a pioneer in fully including children with disabilities, who must constitute 10% of the population served. This mandate harkens back to the lessons learned from Montessori about the benefits of early intervention. Early education for all children with disabilities is a relatively recent phenomenon. For an overview of its history, see the lens on *Including All Children: Early Childhood Special Education in Historical Perspective*.

An Educational Program

The educational model for the Head Start program is the nursery school, specifically the Bank Street model (Greenberg, 1987). Over the years, Head Start's educational program has changed as new knowledge has emerged. But its core is developmentally appropriate practice, with its foundation going as far back as Comenius and Pestalozzi.

Because it was based on the laboratory nursery school model, many Head Start programs were and still are half-day. This is changing as more families need full-day child care, but Head Start has yet to completely merge the child care and nursery school threads of the field.

The rapid launch and expansion of Head Start meant that, like the WPA and Lanham Act centers, a large workforce was needed on short notice. As a result, minimal training was required for teachers. Efforts to improve qualifications as well as compensation have been challenging ever since.

A Parent Involvement Program

A core component of Head Start's mission is parent involvement. Here we see the influence of Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Jimmy Hymes, and the parent cooperative movement. In Head Start, however, parents are not only involved in the classroom; they are also part of the governance of the program, acting in major decision-making roles.

As part of the War on Poverty, Head Start's mandate included hiring parents as teachers and in other positions. At times, as many as one-third of the staff have been parents in the program. As in the case of WPA nurseries, however, hiring parents has presented the challenges of ensuring that the teachers are professionally qualified and has created the need for a professional development system.

The National Laboratory

An important part of Head Start's mission is to act as the national laboratory for the field. In this role, Head Start has funded seminal research and contributed to the development of curriculum and teacher training models. Head Start programs also partner with universities on research projects. In this capacity, Head Start has supplanted the child study laboratory schools of the early 20th century.

Head Start programs are locally administered and controlled. But Head Start has maintained its integrity and consistency despite its national scope because every grantee must meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards. These standards address, at least for Head Start, the recurring questions that confront the early childhood field.

Building on a Tradition of Excellence

The fundamental questions that have faced the field since its inception continue to dominate the conversation: How is quality defined in programs for children? What should be the qualifications for teachers and how should they be prepared? What are the goals for children's learning and development? What should be the content of the curriculum and how should it be taught?



Including All Children

Early Childhood Special Education in Historical Perspective

When I first met my neighbor Clark—a large, friendly man about my age—I was struck by his delightful sense of humor and learned of his love of fishing and television. Even a brief encounter with Clark revealed that he had an intellectual disability, but spending time with him was always great fun. One day, while reading a book on my porch, I spied Clark watching me. When I asked him to join me, he replied, “I’d like to read a book.” An older neighbor who’d known Clark since he was a child later explained, “Clark started school like all the other kids, back in the mid-1950s, but after a few days, they sent him home. They said, ‘It didn’t work out.’” Clark never returned to school.

If Clark had been born today, he would probably be diagnosed as having mild intellectual disability. His life experience would have been quite different due to major changes in special education services. In the latter part of the 20th century, parents of children with disabilities who were unable to obtain services formed organizations such as the Association for Retarded Children (ARC) and United Cerebral Palsy and also started preschools for the children. With the advocacy of parents, special educators, and other professionals, public laws began to change. In 1972, the

government mandated that 10% of Head Start’s student population be children with special needs.

By far the most important event in the history of special education was the passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which in 1990 was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law established standards for how public schools must serve children with disabilities, from ages 3 to 21. A few years later, Public Law 99-457 extended services to children from birth to 3 years of age with emphasis on the role of families in early intervention. In addition, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990 requires that programs be accessible for persons with disabilities, and prohibits child care centers from discriminating on the basis of disability.

Early childhood special education today is the result of an amalgamation of traditional K–12 special education, regular early childhood education, and compensatory education including federal programs such as Head Start that were originally designed to “compensate” for areas of need in children’s lives. The history of special education goes back to well before Maria Montessori demonstrated the power of early intervention to change children’s lives. It is the story of many people working together to make a difference on behalf of children like Clark.

Looking back through history, we find that many ideas are revisited: stages of development, active learning, children’s interests, sensory learning, positive guidance, image of the child, the teachers’ role, and the role of materials and environments. But differences emerge as well. Today we view the teacher’s role as more intentional than our predecessors did, and we no longer see children’s development as a natural unfolding. Instead, we better understand the interaction of environment and biology. In addition, developmental stages are not rigid as previously assumed. Standards and approaches need to be flexible and changing—based on new knowledge—unlike Maria Montessori and Susan Blow, who refused to change their views.

The most basic history lessons that early childhood teachers should never forget include these:

- We all need to learn from children, as did all of the historical figures discussed in this chapter and as Caroline Pratt wisely put it.
- We need to draw on science and the wisdom of experience, as Patty Smith Hill and Lucy Sprague Mitchell modeled for us.
- And as Patty Smith Hill believed, it is always valuable to listen to opposing points of view and learn from them.



revisiting the case study

... the Preschool Classroom

Take a moment to revisit the classroom observations of the college students in the opening vignette of this chapter. The traces of early childhood history should now be apparent. The students saw Comenius's picture books and alphabet books, evidence of Froebel's gifts in the wooden cube and parquetry blocks, and the legacy of Maria Montessori in the child-sized furniture and sandpaper letters. They also observed children's active play with Caroline Pratt's unit blocks and Patty Smith Hill's beloved dramatic play. Their firehouse field trips

are reminiscent of John Dewey's call for active learning and integrated curriculum as well as Lucy Sprague Mitchell's Bank Street approach. The woodworking tables and cooking are more evidence of Dewey's influence. Finally, the students saw the lasting contribution of Lucy Sprague Mitchell's writer's workshops in Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon* and the enduring joy of singing Patty Smith Hill's "Happy Birthday" on one child's most special day. ▲

2 Chapter Summary

- Studying history is valuable because it helps people understand current issues, avoid getting stuck in the past, aspire to make a difference for children, and advocate for change.
- Different periods of history have had different perspectives on children and childhood, which have implications for how children are treated and what kinds of education they are provided.
- Early education in the United States was strongly influenced by Western European ideas, such as those of Comenius, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Montessori. Although European ideas are not the only, nor necessarily the best, educational concepts in the world, current practices strongly reflect these early influences.
- The kindergarten movement in the United States was based directly on the work of Froebel and led by Elizabeth Peabody, Susan Blow, and others who spread his ideas widely through teacher training and founding the International Kindergarten Union.
- The progressive education movement led by John Dewey had a profound impact on education in the United States, especially early childhood education, whose principles of developmentally appropriate practice are congruent with progressive ideas.
- The nursery school movement, which grew out of the child study movement, eventually launched the wider field of early childhood education through the leadership of Patty Smith Hill and Lucy Sprague Mitchell, among many others.
- The child care movement grew out of social welfare efforts for low income families, focused on the need to support working parents, and became associated with physical care rather than education, although this division is changing.
- African Americans, Native Americans, and Latino Americans played significant roles in the history of early childhood education although their contributions are not well documented.
- The launch of Head Start in the mid-1960s brought together the various strands of early childhood history, which are reflected in its comprehensive services, developmentally appropriate educational program, parent involvement, and its role as a national laboratory.



observe, reflect, apply*



1. Examine this picture of materials and activities typically found in an early childhood classroom. Whose lasting contribution to early education do they represent?
 - a. John Locke
 - b. Patty Smith Hill
 - c. Maria Montessori
 - d. Friederich Froebel
2. What perspective on how children learn do Montessori's materials reflect?
 - a. Children learn best by working individually most of the time rather than in groups and specially designed materials help them independently develop skills.
 - b. Children learn best by playing and pretend play is especially valuable.
 - c. Children learn best through constructive play which supports their creativity and representational ability.
 - d. Materials can be designed to train children's eye-hand coordination and mental activity.
3. In what ways do John Dewey's progressive education ideas still influence early childhood education?
 - a. The focus on integrated curriculum
 - b. Emphasis on whole group instruction
 - c. Involving children in decision-making
 - d. A focus on preparing children to pass tests
4. Why has the record of early childhood history been dominated by Western European individuals and ideas?
 - a. White, Western Europeans were in positions of power.

- b. Written historical records of other group's experiences are limited.
- c. Very few early childhood education programs existed before Head Start.
- d. Formal early childhood education programs were culturally inappropriate.

**Answers to multiple choice questions appear at the end of this chapter.*

Observations

1. Visit an art gallery or examine an art history textbook. Look for paintings of children dated from the 14th century to the present day. Reflect on what the concept of "childhood" has meant at various points in history as depicted in the paintings. Decide how the image of childhood has changed over time, and what implications that might have for how children are treated.
2. Observe in public school prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms. Reflect on what Patty Smith Hill might have thought about present-day early childhood programs in public schools. Decide what you think is congruent with her views of education and what is contrary.
3. Visit a toy store or explore the website of a toy company. What kinds of toys are popular with various age groups? How do today's toys reflect the changing images of children and the ideas and contributions of the historical figures in early childhood education described in this chapter?



key terms

- ▲ absorbent mind
- ▲ Bank Street approach
- ▲ child-centered curriculum
- ▲ child study movement
- ▲ competent child
- ▲ constructivism
- ▲ day nurseries
- ▲ Froebel's occupations and gifts
- ▲ integrated curriculum
- ▲ Lanham Act
- ▲ nursery schools
- ▲ progressive education movement
- ▲ WPA nurseries

reading and websites

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American Montessori Society

www.amshq.org

Association for Childhood Education International

www.acei.org

International Step by Step Association

www.issa.nl.org

Office of Head Start

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>

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- Complete Assignments and Activities that can help you more deeply understand the chapter content.
- Apply and practice your understanding of the core teaching skills identified in the chapter with the Building Teaching Skills and Dispositions learning units.
- Check your comprehension on the content covered in the chapter by going to the Study Plan in the Book Resources for your text. Here you will be able to take a chapter quiz, receive feedback on your answers, and then access Review, Practice, and Enrichment activities to enhance your understanding of chapter content.

*Answers to Multiple Choice Questions

1. *b*
2. *a*
3. *a* and *c*
4. *a* and *b*