Preface

Young children learn best when they have authentic and age-appropriate experiences with a broad range of people, ideas, activities, and materials. This book offers this type of framework to college and university students who are preparing to be teachers. The book is based on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in the social studies. The research and theoretical base support the belief that teachers of young children must recognize and embrace children’s individual development and the factors that influence those differences. Thus, this book seeks to assist and guide pre-service and in-service teachers with ways to teach social studies in early childhood environments in many settings.

This book also emphasizes that social studies happens everywhere, every day, and with everyone. A major goal in the textbook is to demonstrate how the standards (NCSS and NAEYC) can be integrated into the daily curriculum—emphasizing throughout that learning does not happen in compartments or silos but rather together and sometimes simultaneously.

KEY FEATURES OF THIS TEXT

The content-related chapters have the following key features that make it easy to use the book not only as an information resource but also as an activity resource:

- Big idea charts summarize the key ideas in the chapter, giving the reader classroom applications and the standards met. This feature allows the reader to understand what he/she can expect in the rest of the chapter.
- Adaptations for English language learners figures incorporate best practices for all young learners and focus those practices on helping linguistically diverse students to learn in a variety of ways.
- Accommodations for children with diverse needs figures promote appropriate methods, materials, and interactions for children with special needs.
Preface

- Sample activities are integrated through each of the chapter narratives and are highlighted in lesson planning sections. Nearly all chapters have a section with sample activities that the preservice teacher or in-service teacher can use.
- Connections to Literacy sections provide examples of trade fiction and nonfiction books that can be used with social studies topics and integrated with literacy and other subject areas.
- Resources sections provide a list of additional sources that can be used either as background information or for use with children.
- Home/School Connection boxes are included to emphasize the importance of the home to each child’s learning experience and to provide ways to engage the families.
- Learning centers sections are included to emphasize the importance of play for young children’s learning. These sections provide ideas for practical applications in classroom settings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, we wish to recognize Pearson Higher Education for its commitment to education. Pearson’s vision and dedication have contributed to improved understanding of teaching social studies and continue to support teachers in their efforts to teach children social studies.

This book is a collaborative endeavor by many individuals. We are grateful to Julie Peters, our Senior Acquisitions Editor, who provided invaluable guidance and support. Her exceptional feedback, suggestions, and editing were instrumental in producing this book. We would like to thank many others for their contributions: Their tireless efforts, attention to detail, and encouragement brought this book to successful completion.

We are grateful to our reviewers and want to express our sincere appreciation for their insightful critiques, suggestions, and ability to help us see issues from multiple perspectives. They include the following: Natalie Young, Northern Illinois University; Lynn S. Kline, The University of Akron; and John P. Broome, University of Mary Washington.

We sincerely appreciate several others who helped with gathering children’s photos and artifacts for preparation of the book. Those include the following: families of children at the Grace B. Luhrs Elementary
University School and Hamilton Heights Elementary School; Konnie Serr, first-grade teacher; and Lisa Cline, Administrative Assistant.

Finally, we would like to thank our readers for their dedication and commitment to improving the quality of teaching social studies to young children in ways that come naturally to them. Providing them with thoughtful lessons, hands-on activities, and important discussions helps them make sense—in developmentally appropriate ways—of the world in which they live.
Understanding the Development of Social Studies Concepts and Young Children

Learning Outcomes

After reading this you should be able to:

• Explain the process of learning about social studies through the theories and research of Piaget, Erikson, Ainsworth, Kohlberg/Gilligan, and Vygotsky.
• Explain what is meant by developmentally appropriate practices in social studies.
• Describe general characteristics of children in various stages and how they learn social studies.
• Explain how children’s literature can be used to support learning of social studies.
• Describe the types of adaptations that can be planned for English language learners (ELL) and children with special needs that might help them acquire social studies concepts.
• Explain how to involve families/caregivers in supporting the acquisition of social studies skills at home.
Social Studies Education Goals

Welcome to the world of helping young children learn about themselves, each other, and the broader community. Helping young children gain social skills and social understanding requires both knowledge of social studies content and comprehension of child development. To provide you with both of these, we use nationally recognized sources as our framework in this textbook. Two major sources are the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) standards (see sidebar) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) principles of developmentally appropriate practice (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; see Figure 1.1 for a summary of influential theories and researchers). Melendez, Beck, and Fletcher (2000) have summarized five goals that will also be crucial to remember throughout this text:

1. **Individual development.** Young children are developing in the areas of self-esteem and self-concept, which are impacted by the people around them—other children, teachers, caregivers, and families—who in turn influence their character. Individual development takes place while interacting with others, whether in play or other activities. In these situations, young children can learn to solve problems, cope with strong emotions, and learn to

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Standards Addressed in this Chapter

**NCSS Standards**

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has organized social studies into 10 broad interrelated and holistic themes. Those addressed in each of the upcoming chapters will be in bold:

1. Culture
2. Time, continuity, and change
3. People, places, and environments
4. Individual development and identity
5. Individuals, groups, and institutions
6. Power, authority, and governance
7. Production, distribution, and consumption
8. Science, technology, and society
9. Global connections
10. Civic ideals and practices (NCSS, 2010)

negotiate. Additionally, teachers can foster individual development in the way they interact and communicate with children.

2. **Social and civic competence.** Young children at a very early age are interacting with people around them. Their knowledge, skills, and attitudes about the people and community around them are critical for future interactions. To promote this competence, children in the primary grades should learn about their communities. The basis of this knowledge and skill can start in the classroom community and expand as the children grow older.

3. **Knowledge-based concept of social reality.** Classroom activities provide experiences that allow children to acquire and develop ideas about their social reality, encouraging a variety of ways to look at, and value, diversity.

4. **Appreciation and respect for human diversity.** Human diversity exists everywhere. Young children need to value differences that exist around them, such as physical and cultural variations. Classroom discussions, experiences, interactions, and activities must cultivate the knowledge of and, consequently, the appreciation of and respect for diversity. Through an effective social studies curriculum, teachers will foster appreciation for these differences.

5. **Global citizenship.** The idea of being a part of the world needs to take root and flourish in the awareness of young children as they grow. Thus teachers are to engender in children “a sense of responsibility for their acts and for their impact on others” (Melendez et al., p. 27).

The NCSS themes guide teachers in deriving content that can be further categorized into the subject areas of geography, history, economics, and civics/political science. Throughout these themes is also an underlying awareness of and appreciation for multicultural education. Both content and strategy must lead to the following teaching goals:

Creating a caring community of learners
Enhancing development and learning
Planning curriculum that will lead to the achievement of important goals
Assessing children’s development and learning

SETTING THE STAGE FOR LEARNING

The theories discussed here center on learning in social contexts, as related to the development of young children (birth through third grade). It is important to remember that learning must be discussed with a clear and strong focus on both research and theoretical base. Teachers must understand theory because theory guides and informs practice. Being grounded in research and theory provides a solid foundation for making learning relevant and age appropriate.

The theorists and researchers most often mentioned in the early development of social skills are the following:

Jean Piaget
Lev Vygotsky
Erik Erickson
Mary Ainsworth
Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan
Urie Bronfenbrenner

Figure 1.1 presents a brief overview of their theories and research as they relate to children’s development of social understanding; a brief example of application is given:

Figure 1.1
Theories and Applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theorist/Researcher</th>
<th>Terms Associated with This Theory as It Relates to Social Studies</th>
<th>Example of an Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jean Piaget and Barbel Inhelder (1969)</td>
<td>Development occurs in stages. In early childhood these are named the Sensory-Perceptual-Motor, Preoperational, and Concrete Operational Stages. Some characteristics of the Preoperational stage include egocentrism, difficulty in decentering, and perspective-taking.</td>
<td>Teachers of young children must be aware that children's thinking is focused on meeting their own needs and that they require help in understanding the needs of others. This ability grows over time with assistance from caring adults.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTEr 1 Understanding the Development of Social Studies Concepts and Young Children

**Figure 1.1 (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theorist/Researcher</th>
<th>Terms Associated with This Theory as It Relates to Social Studies</th>
<th>Example of an Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erik Erikson (1950)</strong></td>
<td>Human development proceeds through a series of social stage crises that must be resolved successfully for optimal growth and development.</td>
<td>Teachers of young children will need to provide environments that support children as they work to resolve these crises. Examples include:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  *In the early years these are called:*
  - Trust vs. Mistrust

  Provide infant rooms that are responsive to babies' language and physical needs (diaper changing routines that have rich language and interaction).

  *Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt*

  Make sure that toddler rooms allow children to move, explore, and gain skills in interacting in safe ways (toilet-training routines that are individualized, spaces that are challenging but not overwhelming, and so on).

  *Initiative vs. Guilt*

  Incorporate preschool experiences that continue to expand language development and help children build on new skills in movement, problem-solving, and interactions in both group times and center times. 

  *Note:* Play begins a major vehicle here to develop both self-regulation and executive functioning (Bodrova and Leong, 1996).

  Kindergarten and primary grades provide children with transitioning opportunities to move from early childhood settings into school-age settings (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003).

  *Industry vs. Inferiority*

  Classrooms continue to provide age-appropriate materials and activities that support the growth of social skills (such as projects, family engagement, use of home language, use of both fiction and nonfiction sources, and so on).

  Primary grade children in elementary school are given opportunities to practice decision-making without explicit adult control. These scaffolded opportunities promote the growth of autonomy, perseverance, and integrity.
### Theorist/Researcher

#### Lev Vygotsky (1978)

**Sociocultural theory** states that young children's learning is influenced by both the immediate community and the larger social/historical context. Major terms include:

- **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**
- **Tools**

Families, community, and society influence what children learn and how they learn it. Examples include the ways that families teach each other about child rearing and guidance methods as well as large government programs such as Head Start and No Child Left Behind.

Vygotsky's theory states that learning occurs first with the help of others or with the help of tools; then gradually children reach a level of independence after practicing a new skill. One of the major components of the ZPD is that of recursion, in which learning seems to be forgotten and children need time and practice to return to skills acquired earlier. Play and projects in the primary grades help children remember the terms and concepts learned earlier.

#### Mary Ainsworth (1989)

**Attachment** theory indicates that all humans need and benefit from close, intimate relationships in infancy.

Infants and toddlers need responsive adults who can provide supportive, consistent interactions that promote children's explorations of the world. It is vital that the same adults interact with babies and toddlers over a long period of time to build rapport, trust, and so on.

Alice Honig (2010) has written and presented extensively about the many ways attachment theory can be implemented with very young children.

#### Urie Bronfenbrenner (1975)

**Bioecological theory** centers on understanding that spheres of influence surround each child, involving the family, community, school, local government, broader influences, and so forth, and that these spheres interact with each other and with the child.

Classroom teachers should understand that a child's home and neighborhood form a basis for understanding social studies concepts.

#### Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) and Carol Gilligan (1982)

Kohlberg's theory of the stages of **moral development** holds that rules and laws increasingly lead to decisions based on ethics. Gilligan's work on moral decision-making is based on caring relationships.

Classroom practices help children come to understand the need for caring about each other, resolving differences through both rules and fair interactions. Examples of such practices have been described by other authors such as Nell Noddings, Dan Gartrell, and the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL).

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To further your understanding of the typical characteristics of child development, review Figures 1.2 through 1.5. As you read, reflect on your current knowledge of child development and how it applies to children's learning of social studies.
Figure 1.2
General Characteristics of Children from Birth to Age 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Children 0–3 Years Old</th>
<th>How Teachers Can Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>0–9 months:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use the sense of smell, sight, hearing,</td>
<td>• Be involved in responsive interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>touch, and taste to learn about the world</td>
<td>• Interact, converse with the baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>around them.</td>
<td>• Provide pleasurable routines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage with familiar people, that is,</td>
<td>• Balance between carry and cuddle and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smile, laugh, gaze, grin, coo, reach out,</td>
<td>floor or firm surface time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and hold tight.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn through movement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8–18 months:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to move.</td>
<td>• Play and talk to infants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exploration as a key to learning.</td>
<td>• Make eye contact and use gestures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More interest in their peers.</td>
<td>• Encourage interest in language by reading to infants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More attached to adults they love.</td>
<td>• Use slow speech, enunciate words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More responsive to communication.</td>
<td>• Repeat words—names, objects, and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16–36 months (toddlers):</strong></td>
<td>• Support peer interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identity.</td>
<td>• Provide health and safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Desire for independence and control.</td>
<td>• Provide room to roam for infants learning to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased desire to explore.</td>
<td>be mobile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for security.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Imitate adults.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fascinated by words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enjoy hearing stories about people and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>things they know.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Love to categorize objects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seek out friends, enjoy play, and engage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in group activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn the meaning of being a girl or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boy and notice differences between girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and boys.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Know the family well.
Greet toddler and family warmly.
Use a warm and caring tone of interaction and touch to demonstrate that children are valued.
Give choices where possible.
Introduce social guidelines.
Organize an environment that will foster chances for control as toddlers participate in various activities.
Frequently read to toddlers.
Comfort toddlers.
#### Figure 1.3
General Characteristics of 3- to 5-Year-Old Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Children 3–5 Years Old</th>
<th>How Teachers Can Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Physically very active—play, running, dance, dramatic play, outdoors.</td>
<td>• Plenty of hands-on activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hearing well developed.</td>
<td>• Plan physical activities indoors and outdoors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continuing development of gross motor skills.</td>
<td>• Provide a variety of objects, such as buttons, zippers, beads to string, and drawing and painting supplies, to help improve their fine motor skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fine motor skills not developed. Difficulty with writing, drawing, cutting.</td>
<td>• Promote a sense of community by model caring and respectful language, class projects, class meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need planned physical activities in order to improve physical development.</td>
<td>• To promote literacy and language development, engage children in conversations and in listening to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socially, more interactions with peers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Often develop close friendships with caring teachers (Howes &amp; Richie, 2002).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emotional development—increased understanding of their own emotions, such as anger, sadness, fear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Figure 1.4
General Characteristics of 5- and 6-Year-Old Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Children 5 and 6 Years Old</th>
<th>How Teachers Can Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Physical development—kindergarteners are doing actions in all areas that are more complex than those performed by children in the 3–5 bracket; for example, they are running faster, have improved cognition, and demonstrate improved social relationships.</td>
<td>• Teach physical skills and offer opportunities to play in which children can use new physical skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More developed fine motor skills, such as writing, drawing, and so on.</td>
<td>• Create an environment that offers time to practice fine and gross motor skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social and emotional development—are more able to apply internal control and monitor their actions, are better at cooperative interaction, and are better at preventing conflict.</td>
<td>• Model whatever it is that you want children to follow, such as empathy and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased interest in friendships and the ability to make and keep friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1.5
General Characteristics of 6- to 8-Year-Old Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Children 6–8 Years Old</th>
<th>How Teachers Can Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Overall growth occurs in all areas of the body, with improved gross and motor skills.</td>
<td>• Create a supportive and safe environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refine gross skills, such as running and jumping, and motor skills, such as drawing and reading.</td>
<td>• Work together with children to develop classroom rules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They have better understanding of relationships, that is, how to make and maintain relationships and what can affect others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exhibit concept acquisition and reason.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They are able to self-regulate their thoughts and attention, plan and organize, retain and recall information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rules are absolute and students are more concerned about pleasing the teacher—“good boy, good girl mentality.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES IN SOCIAL STUDIES

The home environment, the community, and the school are the major places where each child’s social learning experience can be broadened (Mindes, 2005). Social studies begins at birth and develops with each experience. Thus a developmentally appropriate practices model calls for

• Using curriculum founded on everyday familiar experiences to foster learning (social skills in groups; interactions during play; children’s ideas about their world; common words used in social practices such as greetings, hygiene, eating, and so on)

• Involving children in experiences that expand and extend their understanding of democracy (building abilities to cooperate within a group, turn-taking, negotiating, listening, and so on)
Restorative Justice Practices in Early Childhood Programs

Central to social studies are concepts of justice, fairness, and citizenship. Classroom methods to teach these concepts are sometimes collectively referred to as “restorative justice” strategies. Listed below are some classroom practices that promote these concepts in age-appropriate ways:

- Problem-solving discussions at group time meetings
- Conflict resolution meetings
- Dialogue between conflicting parties
- Increasing victim awareness
- Restorative justice conversations

Positive behavior approaches

- Talking about behavior without blaming
- Seeing misbehavior as an opportunity for learning
- Modeling conflict resolution strategies
- Teaching and supporting self-regulation approaches
- Curriculum focus on relationship building and conflict prevention
- Nurture groups and approaches
- Playground strategies that encourage safe play
- Teaching resiliency
- Respecting rights of everyone

Sustainability in Early Childhood Education

Sustainability as a topic in early childhood curricula is still emerging. However, it relates to many of the same themes as others that have been discussed previously in this chapter (e.g. justice, economics, and fairness). Helping children begin to understand and then to act on concepts related to the big topics of sustaining the environment, natural resources, accessibility, technology, and so on, for all people, can be integrated into classrooms on a regular basis (saving water, reusing paper, and recycling many materials, for instance). Davis (2010)
includes articles from a variety of authors in her book *Young Children and the Environment: Early Education for Sustainability* that give both broad reasons and practical ways to include sustainability concepts in programs for young children. Including sustainability themes and activities in the early years enables children to understand even more complex issues in later grades.

**Metacognition and Children’s Understanding of Social Studies Concepts**

Metacognition refers to one’s ability to think about one’s own thinking (Flavell, 1977). In *Growing Minds* (2012), Karen Capraro describes a process that worked with second graders. They first recorded their current thinking (schema) or knowledge about a topic; then they generated questions about the topic. She then taught her class ways to think about their questions and began to define this as inferring. The last step was to recognize the new knowledge they had gained.

This model, named SQiNK (schema, questions, inferring, new knowledge) by the children, also helps you think about how to teach the social studies concepts in this book. Thinking both about your own thinking and about how children think will be repeating themes.

Supporting your understanding of children’s development with appropriate theoretical grounding is a focus of this first chapter. By gaining a deep knowledge of both individual and age-typical development, classroom teachers are better able to plan social studies content and strategies that convey the central concepts in the social studies curriculum. This chapter introduces the themes of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), and these themes continue throughout the text.

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**HOME/SCHOOL CONNECTION**

Home and school relations must be built and maintained for each age group. However, it is particularly critical for caregivers of infants and toddlers. It is important that the infant care teacher value the information provided by the family and, at the same time, that the family value the knowledge and personality
of the child care teacher. This partnership provides a growing relationship that will in turn benefit the child. Communication must be ongoing, with the infant care teacher and the parents sharing information about sleeping, eating, playing, elimination patterns, and learning.

The infant care teacher must make an effort to learn more about the culture of the family, particularly when the home culture is different from that of the teacher. It is also important because childrearing perspectives differ. The child care teacher must be able to consider and openly discuss with the family differences and similarities in caring for their child.

Toddlers need support as they continue to grow. Sharing new developments and interests allows both parents and care teachers to support the toddler. Knowing and understanding the family creates continuity of care between home and child care, which allows the child to thrive and at the same time gain teacher and parental support.

Early childhood settings should be a place where parents are welcome to participate—to read to children and share their skills or just observe children in action. Teachers should initiate conversations regarding differences in perspectives so that they forge a strong partnership with parents. The teacher can support the family by making a picture book or a list of words for older children in the family’s language, which can be used to communicate with the child. Younger children will need to hear familiar words that hold specific meaning to them. Furthermore, this will open a way to future communication and may gain help the teacher might need from the family. At this stage, social studies has a lot to do with teaching children about relationships and their environment both at home and at school.

In the primary grades, family involvement has traditionally moved to a parent-teacher conference event, an occasional open house, or a PTA meeting. Some research, however, indicates that a more comprehensive family engagement model is much more powerful in creating school and home environments that support children’s academic success.

(continued)
ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DIVERSE NEEDS

Providing proper and just educational accommodations for children with diverse needs is an important part of the educational process. Each chapter will include figures presenting appropriate adaptations for these students: those for English language learners, or ELL (Figure 1.6), and those for students with special needs (Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.6
Adaptations for ELL.

Joyce Epstein (2001) has identified the following six major components for family engagement:

- Parenting
- Communicating
- Volunteering
- Learning at home
- Decision-making
- Collaborating with the community

Adaptations for English Language Learners

It is most important for teachers to understand the home culture and home language of the child. Families should be encouraged to share their perspectives regarding child care, childrearing, learning, problem-solving, and socializing. Teachers should be willing to actively listen and discuss differences and similarities. These discussions should result in compromises and agreements on the best way to promote the child’s growth and development.

Schools should facilitate communications for parents who do not speak English by recruiting bilingual staff or using translators where needed throughout the day, such as in classrooms, conferences, and meetings.

Here are some specific strategies:

- Use picture books or lists of words in the family’s language.
- Present pictures with captions in both the family’s language and English for older children (kindergarten through primary age).
• For younger children (infants and toddlers), just using words or pointing to pictures will create the necessary familiarity.
• Engaging ELL and children who are behind in vocabulary and other language skills in additional conversations will support comprehension.
• Engage children with hands-on materials that will provide further language development in more meaningful ways than just auditory instruction.
• Connect sensory experiences (touching, smelling, seeing, tasting, hearing) with both English and home language terms.

Teachers should spend additional time and use multiple strategies to help English language learners with academic language. This is also referred to as “cognitive academic language proficiency,” or CALP (Cummins, 2008). Academic language consists of those words and terms that are used in school but not typically in homes or in the community and is therefore more challenging in ELL populations. Academic language is critical for success in school because it ties directly to learning content in each subject.

Goldenberg (2006) recommends the following instructional supports:

1. Strategic use of the primary language.
2. Consistent expectations, instruction, and routines.
3. Extended explanations and opportunities for practice.
4. Physical gestures and visual cues.
5. Focusing on the similarities/differences between English and the home language.
6. Building on the home language and skills.
7. Target vocabulary and check comprehension frequently.
8. Paraphrase students’ language and encourage them to expand.

In planning and implementing strategies, it is helpful to bear in mind the stages of English language learners (Krashen & Terrell, 1983):

Stage I: The Silent/Receptive or Preproduction Stage
_Lasts up to six months_

Stage II: The Early Production Stage
_Lasts for another six months_
Children identified with special needs often require the same experiences as typically developing children to acquire social studies skills. However, teachers must understand each child’s background in order to make adequate and relevant adaptations. Adaptations for children with special needs can better take place when caregivers, teachers, and families develop and maintain mutual respect and two-way communication. Special needs may be noticed at infancy or may come to light as the child grows. Either way, families and caregivers/teachers have to work together to ensure provision of suitable adaptations.

Here are some examples of adaptations:

- Adaptations for older children (preschool, kindergarten, or primary grade children) must be specific to their unique needs and not based on a rigid interpretation of the chronological age of the child (e.g., because he is seven he must do this).
- Movement programs can help children with gross motor development disabilities (Pica, 2004).
CONNECTIONS TO LITERACY

Children’s books provide developmentally appropriate ways to learn about social studies. There are many books available that foster geography, history, civics, and economics skills and concepts. The NCSS, in conjunction with the Children’s Book Council (CBC), annually publishes a list that can be used as a guide to selecting good books. The following are some pointers to keep in mind when searching for books (Melendez et al., 2000):

- Review the themes of social studies so that you are aware of the relevant topics, such as geography, history, economics, and diversity.
- Choose books with clear illustrations and good details of concepts.
- Read the story beforehand to make sure it is appropriate for the age level you teach and to assess language level and clarity of descriptions.
- Consider all genres, including folktales, poetry, and song picture books.

Including a variety of multicultural/multiethnic books, songs, and experiences promotes children’s understanding of diversity, in their classroom as well as their community. Specific books and literacy strategies related to teaching social studies content will be mentioned in other chapters.

ASSESSING PREKINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN’S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Assessment is done for the following reasons:

1. To meet the developmental and learning needs of each child.
2. To evaluate and improve program effectiveness.
3. To screen and identify children with potential disabilities or special needs.

Screening needs to be done when children enter the program. Decisions should be made based on information provided by families and collected through observing each child. Anecdotal notes are useful in reminding the teacher of specific observations. Observations must
be done in the following developmental domains: physical, cognitive, social, and emotional. The teacher can find many opportunities to observe a child in an effort to assess him/her, for example, during play, games, center time, discussions, and one on one time with the teacher. For kindergarten and primary grade children, written, paper-pencil tests and other products are collected and used to adjust instruction on a day-to-day basis. Assessment must be made on an ongoing basis “at regular intervals throughout the year” (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 179) and should be integrated into the teaching and curriculum (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Teachers need to ensure that assessment is consistent with developmental and learning goals in the curriculum and that it matches the age, development, and culture of the child (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). It is important for teachers to share the assessments with families; in that way they are able to work together to help the child progress.

**SAMPLE ACTIVITY**

The upcoming chapters will provide suggestions for effective and enjoyable activities. Here is one for the teacher who is learning about the different theories of development.

**Making Observations**

Observe children in different age groups, from infancy through primary age, in a family setting or school environment, and then identify the developmental characteristics outlined by the theorists and researchers mentioned in this chapter.

**RESOURCES**

Teachers have some useful sources to tap into as they learn about developmentally appropriate ways to teach social studies. Two of the most helpful are listed below:

- Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning: csefel.vanderbilt.edu/
- NAEYC: Young Children (YC), Guidance Matters column: naeyc.org/
Assessing Learning Outcomes

• Explain the process of learning through the theories of Piaget, Erikson, Ainsworth, Kohlberg/Gilligan, Bronfenbrenner, and Vygotsky.
• Explain developmentally appropriate practices in social studies.
• Describe general characteristics of children in various stages and how they learn social studies.
• Explain the general social, physical, cognitive, and emotional stages of development that children go through and how the stages could impact the learning of social studies.
• Explain how children’s literature can be used to support learning of social studies.
• Describe the types of adaptations that can be planned for English language learners (ELL) and children with special needs that might help them acquire social studies concepts.
• Explain how to involve families/caregivers in supporting the acquisition of social skills at home and in supporting teachers of young children.
References


