Preface

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

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

New to This Edition

This third edition reflects recent changes in early care and education practice based on legislative and policy changes as well as the latest research on effective practice. Throughout the text, content has been expanded to include even more emphasis on inclusive practices and family diversity. You will find important revisions and updates in the following areas:

- Chapter Learning Goals anchor chapter content, organize chapter sections, and are presented at the start and end of each chapter to provide a map for understanding key chapter concepts
- The Pearson eText contains embedded video links to illustrate key concepts and practices.
- Summaries are streamlined for greater accessibility
- More graphic features include charts and graphs to present content in reader-friendly formats
- Integrated evidence-based practice and Common Core State Standards definition, examples, and application activities in multiple chapters
- Chapter 1: New sections presenting developmental snapshots of young children and broadened definition of early care and education
• Chapter 2: Updated to include Race to the Top initiative
• Chapter 3: Updated throughout, more text converted to graphic features, integration of evidence-based practice
• Chapter 4: All new expanded content on the Bioecological model
• Chapter 5: Completely new chapter on family and child diversity and culturally competent practice
• Chapters 6-11: Content reorganized, streamlined, and updated
• Chapter 12: Additional coverage of professional dispositions, evidence-based practice application activities, and emphasis on criteria of high quality practice

Features of the Text

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

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

Several themes run like threads throughout the text: teachers’ roles, views of children, inclusion, and diversity. These are key aspects of all practice that you, too, must integrate into your thinking and teaching. The reflection prompts, questions at the end of each chapter, and application activities are all designed to facilitate the development of your own beliefs and practices about these key themes. The appendixes contain tools that can be used in this process, including samples of graphic organizers to facilitate content understanding and a comprehensive professional portfolio plan.

Guiding Concepts

Several concepts that guide this text are used as a lens through which we will view the field. First, this text takes a child-centered approach to early childhood education. Childhood is a unique and valued period of life, and children are capable, competent, and active participants in their growth and learning.

Another guiding concept is the belief, flowing from constructivist learning theory, that children are busily and actively building knowledge from their earliest moments through meaningful experiences and relationships with people and environments. Children continue this lively inner process even when they are quiet. Their learning, thinking, and feeling are expressed in myriad “languages,” or ways of communicating. Teachers must be receptive and respectful of them all.

I strongly believe that teaching is a personal as well as a professional endeavor. Adults and children form social bonds and relationships that are at the heart of learning.
Above all else, I believe that children deserve to be respected and loved by the adults in their lives who joyfully engage in this challenging, complex, and rewarding field. It is with this spirit of love and respect that I present this text to you and wish you a challenging, surprising, rewarding journey.

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

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

**Ancillaries Accompanying This Text**

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

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

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

- **TestGen** is a powerful test generator available exclusively from Pearson. You install TestGen on your personal computer (Windows or Macintosh) and create your own tests for classroom testing and for other specialized delivery options, such as over a local area network or on the web. It contains the same test items as the Online Test Bank. Using TestGen, assessments can be created for both print or testing online. The tests can be downloaded in the following formats:
  - TestGen Testbank file—PC
  - TestGen Testbank file—MAC
  - TestGen Testbank—Blackboard 9 TIF
  - TestGen Testbank—Blackboard CE/Vista (WebCT) TIF
  - Angel Test Bank (zip)
  - D2L Test Bank (zip)
  - Moodle Test Bank
  - Sakai Test Bank (zip)

- **Online PowerPoint® Slides** Colorful PowerPoint® slides prompt student engagement with reflective questions, highlight key concepts and strategies in each chapter.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

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

I would like to thank the following reviewers for their helpful comments: Stephanie Davidson, Jackson State University; Maureen Gerard, Arizona State University; Mary Larue, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College; and Catherine Neimetz, Eastern University. A very special thank you also goes out to the dedicated teachers and families at the Northampton Community College Child Care Center, the East Stroudsburg University Child Care Center, the Sheridan, WY, YMCA Child Care Center, and the Colby-Sawyer College Windy Hill Lab School. The inspired, exemplary, joyful practice I have been fortunate enough to experience in each of these settings continues to fuel my passionate dedication to our field.

Finally, I lovingly dedicate this project to Greisan, the motivation behind it all.
Being an early childhood educator is a constant journey. It is exciting, challenging, tiring, invigorating, and always changing. Above all else, it is rewarding. There is no more influential period of life than the first 8 years. Because of the tremendous leaps that occur in development during the early years, early childhood educators are positioned to have profound effect on children’s lives. The role of the teacher of young children is, therefore, crucial to our future generations. As early childhood educators, we take on many different roles in the course of our days: teacher, researcher, lifelong learner, caregiver, family and child advocate, provocateur (provoking children’s thinking), playmate, and many others. We are called upon daily to face many daunting challenges and tasks. This chapter provides a broad definition of early childhood education (ECE), highlights of who young children are developmentally and as

Chapter Learning Goals

- Identify key highlights of development and learning in children from birth to 8 years old.
- Explore the scope and features of early childhood education.
- Discuss the role and tasks of a teacher-education student.
- Describe the complex roles of early childhood teachers.
- Articulate important issues facing today’s early childhood profession.
- Organize initial ideas about your professional identity.
learners, and presents important trends and issues in current practice today. You will begin to reflect on how you see yourself as a professional as you consider your role in the lives of children and families.

**WHO IS THE “YOUNG CHILD”?**

The ages from birth through 8 years old define the term *young children* or the *early childhood years*. At no other phase of life do we undergo such radical, rapid, and significant changes. For the sheer developmental effect of this time, early childhood is considered the most significant and influential time of life. While there are always variations in the timing and sometimes sequence of young children’s growth and development, copious research also demonstrates that there are predictable patterns, ranges, and trends, which are universal in typically developing children. Figures 1–2 through 1–4 provide an outline of typical development in infancy, toddlerhood, preschool, and early school ages along with examples of learning processes and experiences found in quality early care and education settings.

**Infants**

Figure 1–1 provides a snapshot overview of major trends in infant development along with responsive caregiver practices.

**Toddlers**

As older infants develop independent mobility, they move into toddlerhood, where sense of self, autonomy in self-care and activities, as well as choice-making blossom. Building on secure, trusted relationships with caregivers, toddlers’ exploration of their world broadens along with expansions in language development. Figure 1–2 provides a snapshot of infant/toddler development and responsive caregiver practices.

**Preschoolers**

The preschool years are marked by an astounding burst of language development as well as marked growth in physical coordination and curiosity about the world and how things work. The autonomy and independence cultivated in the toddler years sets the stage for preschoolers to make choices about activities and interests and act on their decisions and plans. Figure 1–3 provides a snapshot overview of 3–5 year old’s development along with key teacher practices.

**Early Elementary**

As children enter formal school settings in the early elementary years, social activities, peer relationships, and opportunities to create, imagine, and construct become especially
Children’s curiosity and natural desire to explore, test, observe, and understand their world consumes their focus in these years. Competence and self-esteem are supported and strengthened through developmentally aligned learning and social experiences. Figure 1-4 provides an overview of development for 5-8 year olds along with effective teacher practices.
FIGURE 1-2

Toddler Typical Development and Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Children Develop and Learn in Toddlerhood</th>
<th>What Learning Looks Like in Quality ECE</th>
<th>Examples of Infants’ Learning Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toddlers (2–3 years)</td>
<td>Toddlers learn through self-chosen activities and inquiry projects designed to explore aspects of their world.</td>
<td>Projects exploring how things work through hands-on and sensory play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddlers love to explore their world and their growing physical capabilities. A toddler’s day should be filled with active play.</td>
<td>Toddlers are still sensory, hands-on learners and need to be actively doing to learn.</td>
<td>Exploring perspective and reflection with mirror, light, and shadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddlers need opportunities to explore and experiment with classmates and children of varying ages to learn the foundations of social skills necessary to be successful learners and members of a community.</td>
<td>Curiosity about the world around them, inside and outside, sparks keen observation.</td>
<td>Noticing changes in their world through outdoor observations and discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddlers have opportunity for lots of active play, including climbing and large-motor games, balanced with rest and quiet periods.</td>
<td>Toddlers have opportunity for lots of active play, including climbing and large-motor games, balanced with rest and quiet periods.</td>
<td>Helping to care for materials, self, and environment by putting items away, helping to clean up smallmesses, hand washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddlers strengthen self-care skills through eating, dressing, and cleaning experiences.</td>
<td>Toddlers strengthen self-care skills through eating, dressing, and cleaning experiences.</td>
<td>Family-style, relaxed, social meals promote nutrition and social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing stories and books helps build early language and literacy skills.</td>
<td>Sharing stories and books helps build early language and literacy skills.</td>
<td>Dramatic play in authentic, themed center areas such as kitchen, market, post office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building with varied materials such as blocks develops language, visual-spatial, math, social, and physical development.</td>
<td>Building with varied materials such as blocks develops language, visual-spatial, math, social, and physical development.</td>
<td>Ample opportunity for construction of real and imagined worlds with blocks, scarves, sticks, sand, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-group play in self-selected center areas provides toddlers with the opportunities to practice social negotiation and build awareness of others.</td>
<td>Small-group play in self-selected center areas provides toddlers with the opportunities to practice social negotiation and build awareness of others.</td>
<td>Daily language experiences such as stories, book sharing, poems, singing, puppets, listening to music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and children develop strong relationships through sensitive caregiving and meaningful interactions.</td>
<td>Teachers and children develop strong relationships through sensitive caregiving and meaningful interactions.</td>
<td>Climbing or large-motor equipment is part of the inside and outside environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong family partnerships are essential in all ECE.</td>
<td>Strong family partnerships are essential in all ECE.</td>
<td>Counting and sorting materials based on color, size, and shape builds early math concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring materials for creative expression, including art, music, and drama, to learn about aesthetics and expression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 1-3

Preschool Typical Development and Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Children Develop and Learn in Preschool</th>
<th>What Learning Looks Like in Quality ECE</th>
<th>Examples of Preschoolers’ Learning Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool (3–5 years)</td>
<td>Preschoolers’ days are balanced among active play (indoors and outdoors); hands-on, inquiry-based projects; guided activities; rest; and routines.</td>
<td>Play, individually or in small social groups, with a variety of hands-on materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dramatic play centers, including restaurant, super-market, kitchen, post office, doctor’s office, etc., support socialization and opportunity to think about their world.</td>
<td>Plentiful language activities, including stories, dramatic play, songs, rhyming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child-guided projects encourage skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success as lifelong learners, including problem-solving, academic skills, content knowledge, curiosity, initiation, choice-making, persistence.</td>
<td>Refinement of small-muscle coordination and utensil grasp through art experiences, cutting, writing, eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preschoolers practice and play with language and develop increasingly complex language knowledge and skills and emergent writing and reading skills.</td>
<td>Manipulating hands-on materials exploring shape, color, weight, height, serialization, sequence, pattern, order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily routines are organized, predictable, flexible, and responsive to children’s dynamic interests and needs.</td>
<td>Exploring the world as scientists: wondering, guessing, testing, observing, reflecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers interact sensitively and responsively to children, promoting initiative and providing individually tailored challenge and support.</td>
<td>Building with blocks to test, think about, and represent ideas about their world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers systematically assess children’s development and learning and use assessments to plan for each child.</td>
<td>Exploring roles and social rules through dramatic play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentation of children’s development and learning is used as evidence and to prompt reflection and dialogue with children and families.</td>
<td>Language throughout the day with story reading and telling, dictating own stories, acting out favorite stories, songs, dialogues, emergent writing and reading, illustrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong family partnerships are essential in all ECE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## FIGURE 1-4

### Early Elementary Typical Development and Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Children Develop and Learn in the Early School Years</th>
<th>What Learning Looks Like in Quality ECE</th>
<th>Examples of K–3rd Graders’ Learning Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Elementary (6–8 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They actively construct their knowledge of the world, self, and others through direct experience and dialogues.</td>
<td>• Organized routines with flexibility focus around children’s interests and needs.</td>
<td>• Problem-solving using math, logic, and science knowledge and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Growing awareness needs and interests in self and others prompt interest in social interaction and belonging.</td>
<td>• Individual, small-group, and large-group experiences balance child-guided activities with adult-guided activities.</td>
<td>• Group projects designed to promote problem-solving, social negotiation, and self-regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They have increasing focus and attention when interested, confident, and motivated.</td>
<td>• Children take increasingly active roles in initiating and carrying out plans.</td>
<td>• Story dramas where children script and act out familiar stories and books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coordination of large and small muscles promotes complex active play.</td>
<td>• Dramatic play becomes increasingly complex and longer and includes more interactions among peers.</td>
<td>• Writing activities, creating stories, journals, reports, illustrations, dialogue circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They enjoy games with rules and making up own rules as a form of problem-solving.</td>
<td>• Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are used frequently; skills continue to refine and develop toward conventional literacy.</td>
<td>• Reading in groups and independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social interaction strengthens self-regulation, sense of belonging, and friendships.</td>
<td>• Content area knowledge and skills increase in competence and focus.</td>
<td>• Constructing representations of ideas, solutions, re-creations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Literacy (and numeracy) skills strengthen toward conventional literacy.</td>
<td>• Teachers systematically assess children’s development and learning and use assessments to plan for each child.</td>
<td>• Games with rules, including cards, board games, physical games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Documentation of children’s development and learning is used as evidence and to prompt reflection and dialogue with children and families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong family partnerships are essential in all ECE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We base all of our work with young children on a foundation of knowledge of child development. This is the starting place for all the myriad of decisions we make for and about children. The previous section is but a brief primer highlighting some of the key milestones and processes in young children’s development and experiences. Educator professional preparation also includes a far more comprehensive exploration and review of important theories, theorists, and milestones.
Early childhood education (ECE) refers to systems of education and care for young children from birth through 8 years old by people other than family members in settings outside of the child's home. Early childhood settings are diverse, including large or small center-based programs, in-home or out-of-home family care, faith-based programs, intervention programs, in-school preschool programs, and public or private early elementary programs. Early childhood care and education professionals are described by a number of terms, including educators, teachers, assistant teachers, child care providers, aides, or caregivers. Professional titles may represent differences in program focus and roles, though some titles are used interchangeably. There is wide variety in the scope, structure, implementation, and programming among early childhood programs serving infants, preschoolers, and early-elementary-age children and their families. This video highlights some of these diverse programs for preschool-age children, including procedures, policies, and activities children engage in across different types of early care and education settings.

The children and adults in these settings also bring vast diversity to the programs in terms of ability, interests, culture, values, languages, professional preparation, and so on. Developing sensitivity to diversity and attitudes and skills to celebrate all members of a group is vitally important. In any setting, relationships are the heart of education. Teaching and learning occur in a social context, in which we continually negotiate a complex system of relationships (schools, families, colleagues, beliefs, practices, communities). Teachers are required to make a myriad of decisions in selecting the most appropriate tools and methods from an astounding array of choices (technologies, ideologies, theories, materials). Teachers also use those decisions to carefully create learning environments that plan for universal norms and also validate and support individual development and choices based on their particular setting. Within infant and toddler programs, focusing on nurturing relationships to strengthen socioemotional development is essential. In preschool-age programs, supporting children’s increasing
activity and interactive exploration is an important focus. For early elementary settings, activities that deepen children’s learning and support peer interactions are developmentally important. Increasingly teaching also involves assessment and accountability to internal and external audiences. To be successful requires that one has a strong foundation of knowledge and skills, as well as dedication and commitment.

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**Scenes From the Field**

**Snapshots of Diverse Practice**

There is wide variety across the span of early childhood practice as we consider the differences in program scope and structure when serving infants, preschoolers, or early-school-age children. Even greater variations exist among diverse settings such as urban schools, rural programs, suburban centers, programs in religious institutions, and schools operated by Native American tribes or Alaskan Native villages. Just as with all early childhood practice, there are common threads along with vast and rich differences based on community setting and program scope.

Carlos oversees programs for infants and toddlers in 14 rural community centers with up to 100 miles between centers. “My programs are all funded with federal grant money designed to serve children from families living in poverty. Enriching care and education are our program goals, but meeting basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, and stable home environments have to be our first priority. Accessing services and focusing on family support and parent education are central to our workday. Nothing else can happen for our children without their basic needs being met.”

Noa teaches preschool in a faith-based program in an affluent urban community. “My families are all highly involved. I’m lucky because some of my old college friends teaching in other places struggle to make connections to families. I’m lucky . . . but I also feel a lot of pressure too. My families have super high expectations of me and their children. Sometimes I worry about all the pressure on them. I just try to be true to my beliefs about children’s development while also showing families just how much their kids are doing, and especially how this time is laying foundations for later learning. They especially want to see a lot of technology. It’s a lot to manage, but I feel good about the positive impact I have on my kids. And because there is so much interaction with families and we do a lot of documentation, I know that we’re working as partners and that they’ll let me know if they have questions or problems.”

Elise is a second-grade teacher in a suburban school. “Over the last five years or so, I’ve really seen a shift in our work. We really focus on competencies and evidence now. Yeah, it’s about testing, but really our district pushes evidence-based practices and lots of kinds of assessments. My team [of second-grade teachers] meets weekly to plan and review the students’ assessments and use that as a basis for planning instruction. We are constantly implementing and evaluating what we’re doing with each student. Every new plan has to include a rationale stating what evidence we’re basing the plan on. Then we also have to write out what evidence we’ll collect to use for the next phase of planning. It sounds like a lot, but now that we’re in the habit, we just use evidence for everything we do. At first it was harder, but now it actually makes sense.”
YOUR ROLE AS A TEACHER-EDUCATION STUDENT: CONSIDERING YOUR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Your task at this point in your professional development is to embrace a reflective perspective. You must learn about the history of this field to envision the future, and you must explore a variety of practices to be able to cultivate your own style. Through your studies and work, you will learn from the past and present, from sound research, from children, from families, from colleagues, and from yourself as you develop your professional identity. The topics in this text provide a foundation from which you can start to build your own teacher identity. Throughout this book and during your teacher-education studies in general, you will be called upon to create a body of work that represents your beliefs and abilities as an educator. Creating a professional portfolio is your first (and an ongoing) effort to define and redefine yourself as an educator.

A portfolio is a collection of work, or artifacts, which represent you: your beliefs, your abilities, your goals, and your accomplishments. It will change throughout your studies and practice. Many people choose a binder, an expanding folio, or some other material that will allow artifacts to be added or withdrawn. You must carefully and thoughtfully select items that reflect your progress, highlight your experiences, and demonstrate your abilities related to state and national teaching standards (Gelfer, Xu, & Perkins, 2004). Your portfolio may be used to assess your progress in your studies, to demonstrate your competencies in interviews, and to document your professional development throughout your career. Periodically reflecting on your portfolio in presentations or interviews will prompt you to summarize your work, learn from your experiences, and articulate who you are or will be as a teacher (Bullock & Hawk, 2001). Throughout this book, you will have opportunities to explore options and strategies for creating your portfolio.

Reflecting on a variety of learning theories and teaching methods and critically examining how they can inform your own practice are important tasks for an education professional. As you read on, continue thinking about general and specific elements presented in each chapter. Find elements that you can envision integrating into your own unique philosophy and practice. Critically examine your own beliefs and potential biases in light of your readings and discussions. Reflect, adapt, and allow yourself to change your beliefs and expectations of teaching, children, and families as you learn about historic and current educational theories and practices. This ongoing process of exploring research and practice while examining your own beliefs is an essential part of becoming a reflective practitioner.

ROLES OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL

As you travel through the history, theories, guiding frameworks, and approaches presented in this book, you will delve further into the many roles embodied by early childhood teachers. Think about how you fit into these roles in the evolving future of the field as you watch this video and read the following sections. While the video outlines the previous version of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC’s) professional standards, the descriptions of varied roles of the early childhood professional paint a rich picture of the many facets of this work.
Your Professional Portfolio

Consider aligning your portfolio around widely accepted standards such as those from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2011) or the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, InTASC (CCSSO, 2011). The headings for each standard, including examples of possible artifacts to include, are as follows (artifacts are described throughout the text):

### NAEYC Standards for Initial Early Childhood Professional Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Possible Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1: Promoting Child Development and Learning</td>
<td>• analysis of metaphors describing children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• statement of beliefs about teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• brochure highlighting development in each domain</td>
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<td>• theorist studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard 2: Building Family and Community Relationships</td>
<td>• family workshop outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• family brochure or newsletter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• family survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• community needs survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• community resource list/brochure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families</td>
<td>• observation reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• program comparison report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• assessment tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• rubrics and checklists created to evaluate classroom environments and children’s progress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• child study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 4: Using Developmentally Effective Approaches</td>
<td>• technology-integrated lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• review of journals or self-evaluations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• learning center designs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• planning webs and charts</td>
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<td>• photo documentation panels</td>
</tr>
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<td>• multiple intelligence self-test and response</td>
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<td>• field supervisor evaluation reports</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• analysis of assistive technology resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 5: Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum</td>
<td>• content-area lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• planning webs and charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• content-focused games and materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 6: Becoming a Professional</td>
<td>• NAEYC membership</td>
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<td>• NAEYC position statements review</td>
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<td>• journal article reviews</td>
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<td>• conference attendance records</td>
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<td>• teacher interview report, including questions on law and policies affecting families and children</td>
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<td>• peer coaching report and self-reflection</td>
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<td>Standard 7: Early Childhood Field Experiences</td>
<td>• comparative paper from observations in two different early childhood settings</td>
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<td>• selections from practicum or field experience journal</td>
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<td>• lesson plan reflections</td>
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<td>• field supervisor evaluation reports</td>
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<td>Standard</td>
<td>Possible Artifacts</td>
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| Standard 1: Learner Development | • analysis of metaphors describing children  
• statement of beliefs about teaching and learning  
• brochure highlighting development in each domain |
| Standard 2: Learning Differences | • statement on diversity in education  
• analysis of inclusive learning setting  
• individualized learning plan |
| Standard 3: Learning Environments | • classroom floor plan  
• learning center design plan  
• outdoor learning environment plan |
| Standard 4: Content Knowledge | • content-area lesson plans  
• content-focused games and materials |
| Standard 5: Application of Content | • integrated project planning webs and charts  
• team-teaching plans integrating multiple content areas  
• documentation panels illustrating student learning  
• field supervisor evaluation reports |
| Standard 6: Assessment | • observation reports  
• program comparison reports  
• assessment tools  
• rubrics and checklists created to evaluate classroom environments and children’s progress  
• child study |
| Standard 7: Planning for Instruction | • integrated lesson plans  
• differentiated lesson plans  
• individualized plans |
| Standard 8: Instructional Strategies | • lesson plan reflections  
• video/photo of lesson plan implementation  
• artifacts of student work with reflection on instruction  
• teacher interview  
• field supervisor evaluations |
| Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice | • reflections on own practice (journals, postlesson plan reflections)  
• peer coaching reports with self-reflection  
• family survey  
• teacher interview |
| Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration | • professional association membership  
• conference attendance records  
• school community event participation |

Using tabs or dividers of some kind, you can create separate sections for each standard, including a section for personal data such as a résumé, educational philosophy, reference letters, licensure test scores such as Praxis, and transcripts. In the standards sections, you can begin to include class assignments such as papers, teaching lessons or units, family newsletters, and any field experiences, including any observation reports or evaluations that fit within the standard topic. As an introduction to each section, consider writing a one-page self-reflection analysis in which you describe any of your experiences that helped prepare you for that standard. This summary and the reflection statement demonstrate not only your writing skills but also your knowledge of standards and your self-awareness.
Teacher

Your role as a teacher may seem the most clear, embodied in the following activities:

- Facilitating children’s development
- Valuing children’s play as important to their development as well as intrinsically enjoyable
- Creating beautiful and engaging learning environments that welcome every child
- Providing learning experiences that pique children’s curiosity and spark their imaginations
- Asking questions to encourage children to think and sometimes to challenge their thinking
- Observing and documenting children’s actions and words to assess their learning and development
- Building strong relationships with children and families
- Being a learner alongside children as coconstructors of curriculum, knowledge, and classroom community

The meaningful, interesting, challenging learning experiences you design should also integrate all areas of development and balance both child-initiated activities and more structured, teacher-guided activities. Every skillful teacher must find balance among developmental
domains, structure of activity, context, and group or individual time. In each of the approaches we discuss in this book, you will see how teachers manage this important task.

Good teaching is built on a solid understanding of developmental theories, which include universal expectations and awareness of individual differences (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009). Teachers understand that learning environments are designed to facilitate growth in all developmental domains. **Developmental domains** include the following:

- Physical development: small-motor skills (picking up, pinching); large-motor skills (walking, skipping), balance, coordination, and general control of movement
- Socioemotional development: getting along with others; understanding, regulating, and expressing feelings; developing moral and ethical beliefs; becoming independent and able to work within a group; sense of self
- Cognitive development: thought process, language, intellectual skills, creativity

Teachers need to be aware of the paths that children’s development generally take so learning experiences may be planned to enhance that development. For example, infants begin to refine their physical control by lifting their heads then sitting up and eventually progress, as toddlers and preschoolers, to walking and running. Development in all domains generally follows predictable sequences, though also with great individual variety and pace (Allen & Marotz, 2003). Educators in today’s diverse and inclusive educational settings must use foundational knowledge of child development while always recognizing and valuing each child as an individual, each with strengths and unique areas of challenge. Each child has a unique repertoire of styles, skills, abilities, strengths, preferences, and needs, and it is every teacher’s primary responsibility to ensure that care and learning experiences validate and support every child.

Although some skills may be categorized within one domain, development should always be viewed as integrated and interrelated. That means that competencies and abilities within each domain affect and are influenced by other domains. For example, learning to walk can be categorized within physical development but is also affected by the infant’s social interactions through encouragement, models, and support. In fact, nearly any developmental milestone you can think of is probably related to the child’s environment just as much as to the child’s internal drive. Children should be viewed holistically and contextually as whole people living and growing among a range of influences in their unique family and community contexts (Noddings, 2005).

Although developmental theories remain an important foundation for teaching, teachers must also become careful observers of individual children and classroom dynamics. For example, teachers often overhear children in dramatic play remarking that two girls or two boys cannot participate in a dramatic play wedding sequence because only boys and girls can marry. Or teachers may notice some children excluding other children of different ethnic backgrounds. Teachers often see preferences in terms of sex as well; boys may gravitate toward certain materials that girls do not play with. On the surface these may seem like typical behaviors. When these scenes are viewed more critically, however, insights into gender biases, stereotypes, or dominant culture can be revealed. Reflective teachers must become aware of these more complex realities of the early childhood classroom (Ryan & Greishaber, 2004). Children’s play is highly complex and a critically important window into their lives and development.

Something that may be a less obvious facet of the role of the teacher is that although teaching is highly complex, demanding, professional work, it is also deeply personal. You must love and enjoy what you do; children deserve to be loved just as they deserve to be respected and valued. Genuine enthusiasm and caring will make you a truly inspiring educator. Your personal commitment and the joy you bring to your teaching also ensure...
that you will continue to find satisfaction and nourishment in your work. At any age, students need to feel that their teachers care about teaching, about their learning, and—most of all—about them as people (Noddings, 1995). With young children, a loving bond formed with teachers is important for healthful emotional development as well as healthful brain development, especially in infancy (Baker & Manfredi/Petitt, 2004). You may spend long hours with children, sometimes even more waking hours than children spend with their families. It is natural and healthful that close bonds be formed.

Keep in mind that children’s attachments are not exclusive. They form personal bonds with any caring, responsive adults who spend long periods of time with them. This is a

Scenes From the Field

Valuing Extended Families

Soon after I started directing a medium-sized center in a diverse community, a Korean family enrolled their 2-year-old son, Jae, in our program. The parents spoke English, but Jae and his grandmother did not. In an effort to ease Jae’s transition to a new country, culture, language, and school, his grandmother came to school each day. At first the teacher tolerated her presence, although she was not particularly pleased with the situation. Whereas her goals for the children included fostering increasing independence, Jae was held on his grandmother’s lap and spoon-fed at meals, spoke in Korean to her and did not speak to other children, and played with her during choice time. The teacher worried that he would not achieve the same goals as the other children.

She made several failed efforts to encourage the grandmother to let Jae reach out and communicate with the teacher and other children. Finally she requested a meeting with the parents and asked them to not allow the grandmother to come to the school. They agreed and she stayed home, but we felt their hurt and reluctance. Jae remained withdrawn and appeared uncomfortable but slowly learned some familiar words in English.

One evening when Jae’s mother came to pick him up, I asked her to talk to me about their family life. She shared with me that, in her family, a grandmother has a very important place as the child’s care provider when the parents are working. She talked about how close bonds between them are highly valued in their culture and said that the caretaking of their young children is an important family goal. As she spoke, I began to realize just how much we had hurt the grandmother personally by denying her role as Jae’s caretaker and also how disrespectful we had been to the family’s culture. I shared my sincere appreciation with her for helping me learn this lesson and assured her that we would make efforts to support the family as a whole.

The teacher and I met several times and talked about how we could do things differently to value both the home culture and the shared goals of developing linguistic and social independence for Jae. We invited his grandmother in three times a week to share in social times, help all of us learn familiar words in Korean, and share stories. Immediately the other children took a new interest in her and Jae, and soon we had learned several new words. Both the teacher and I were amazed at how quickly both the grandmother and Jae learned more English, and we could see the sense of pride in how the class really wanted to learn more about their language and culture. Both Jae and his grandmother became valued, appreciated members of the class. And the teacher and I learned an important lesson about not making assumptions about goals and values.
normal and healthy response, one that actually strengthens the parent-child bond (Baker & Manfredi/Petitt, 2004). Also keep in mind that your role as a teacher is to form close connections to families. Let families know that you both share the same goal: to provide the best environment possible for their children. Reassure them that your relationship with their children supports each child’s development as well as the family as a whole. When families and teachers know they are working together, everyone’s satisfaction improves. Amid all the work you do as a professional, never lose sight of the fact that teaching is personal. Remember that the heart of this work is about relationships. This includes relationships with both children and families (extended families too).

A meaningful way to form close bonds with children can be through their play. Play has been valued throughout our history and across international practice as the primary vehicle for children’s learning and socialization (Fraser, 2007; Bredekamp & Copple, 2009). In particular, teachers need to preserve children’s right to engage deeply in child-initiated play and recognize not only the intrinsic joy but also the power of play to support learning and development (Jenkinson, 2001). Children’s play is often highly complex and varied; something that is sometimes underestimated when observing children’s play. “Different types of play . . . help young children develop a wide array of social-emotional, linguistic, cognitive, and physical knowledge and skills. The more complex the play, the greater the opportunity for children to develop and express their growing understanding of the world” (Gainsely, 2008, p. 1). Although we may strive to make teacher-guided learning fun (a common theme among my students’ professional philosophy statements), we must also hold fast to children’s right to time and space for play in their lives. The spontaneous, imaginative self- and cocreated worlds that emerge in their play serve to nourish them in body, mind, and spirit and give them opportunities to create social bonds in a way that cannot be achieved as meaningfully through other adult-controlled activities. This nourishment is essential to children’s development and a natural and valuable part of early childhood programs.
Throughout this book, you will read about the various theorists’ views of the teacher as a researcher. For as long as there have been teachers, educators have been advocating and practicing their role as researchers. And in our current moment, the call to implement strategies with clear evidence of effectiveness is at the forefront of our professional commitments (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009). In practice this means critically observing your children, your own teaching, and others’ practice through a reflective lens to continually assess the effect and efficacy of your work in the lives of children and families.

- Explore innovations and seek evidence of effectiveness.
- Learn from others’ work by observing and reading journals, joining informal discussions, and attending conferences.
- Stay current with what other professionals are doing.
- Approach your own work in your own classroom with an inquiry stance—question, try, watch, reflect, and try again.

In the spirit of our field’s great pioneers, take every opportunity you can to observe children and reflect on what you see. Everything we know about children has come from the willingness of researchers to observe children and analyze what they do. Learn about your children from your analyses of their actions, behaviors, and conversations. If you experience tough days in the classroom, approach these as challenges to be investigated; there are vast resources for working through various classroom situations, including your colleagues, the faculty, books, and Web sites. Take suggestions from all the sources you can find, and try them out in your work. Not all the ideas you learn about will be the right fit for you, your children, or your families, but embrace the try-and-reflect process. There is no end to what you can learn through research, observation, and reflection throughout your career. As a researcher, you not only become a better educator, you also open yourself to being a lifelong learner. In this video, see how a preschool teacher describes and uses observation techniques to learn about children’s development in authentic contexts.

Lifelong Learner

Although your tenure as a student may officially end when you receive your degree, certification, certificate, grade, or course completion, your role as a learner never ends. At times books, lectures, discussions, and projects may be your education. As you embark into the professional world, experience, collaboration, observation, and reflection become your education. Just as you hope to instill in your children an enthusiasm, curiosity, inquisitiveness, and desire to learn, so you, too, must cultivate these qualities. One of the most motivational aspects of teacher-education programs—and your work thereafter—is the chance to learn by seeing and doing. Cultivate a habit of seeing the potential for growth, learning, and development all around you. Look to your own hobbies and interests for inspiration in your teaching. Share your personal interests with your children. Engaging educators also seek to integrate children’s personal interests into the classroom. Continue to expand your teaching by widening your own interests, skills, and knowledge. Try new things; visit new places. Remember that who you are as a person is how you teach. This truly makes all life’s experiences adventures in personal and professional growth.
Child and Family Advocate

Overarching everything teachers do is the guiding principle that we are advocates for children and families. We respect them. We believe in them. We want to empower them to succeed. We strive to foster healthful growth as individuals and as a family unit with unique and shared culture, beliefs, and goals. The day-to-day practice of working with young children further demands a heightened sensitivity to the unique qualities of childhood. Recognizing that experiences in the early years can greatly affect later developmental outcomes reminds teachers of the care and forethought that must go into each decision we make on behalf of our children. Viewing infancy and childhood as periods of particular vulnerability reminds us that the nature of our behavior affects children and families in many ways. This realization, perhaps more than any other, endows teachers with a tremendous responsibility to hold themselves to the highest standards of professional demeanor and ethical behavior.

Our work and influence stretch far beyond the classroom walls and the end of the school day or school year. We teachers have an effect on children’s lives, and they have an effect on ours. As a teacher, you have a voice in forums where children do not. It is your role to advocate on their behalf in larger public forums through participation in community groups, professional organizations, and other networks. Being an advocate for children means that you must understand public policies affecting children and families. It also means that you may be called upon to help shape those policies in ways that recognize the diversity of today’s families and ensure a positive effect on all children and families (Jalongo et al., 2004).

The view of the “family” as strictly a nuclear unit consisting of a mother, a father, and child(ren) has expanded. Many children live with single parents, extended families, blended families, and nontraditional family members. These may include grandparents, aunts and uncles, other relatives, stepfamily members, partners, or other people who share the child’s life. Some children also live with foster families or appointed guardians who become the child’s family. Keep in mind that all the people in children’s lives influence them and are valued members of their world. It is also important to consider that different generations, just like different cultures, may have different styles and roles in children’s lives. The emphasis on teaching as relationship building encompasses all the influences that create a child’s unique world. Appreciate the vast potential for learning and development provided by children’s families. Working together will make your experience richer and provide great opportunities to enhance everyone’s learning.

Big Ideas in Today’s Early Childhood Practice

The field of early childhood education is dynamic and evolving, as a review of our history will reveal. Many issues that early theorists wrestled with remain topical today. In addition, there are new and complex issues that face teachers and guide our practice. Changes abound all around us: social changes, political changes, technological changes, and demographic changes. As our world becomes increasingly more complex, diverse, and global, teachers’ responsibility to educate children capable of navigating this complex world becomes all the more urgent. This video clip outlines some of the major trends in today’s practice. The major themes at the forefront of present-day practice include:

- programming and advocating for care and education of young children that is meaningfully aligned with children’s development and unique family culture;
- recognizing, valuing, and responding to the increasing diversity within classrooms and communities;
Inclusive classrooms

Classrooms that meaningfully integrate all children, including those with disabilities.

• promoting inclusive classrooms, where diverse learners and abilities are equitably supported, challenged, and appreciated;
• integrating appropriate and comprehensive learning standards and providing evidence assessing and evaluating accountability for children’s achievement of them; and
• systematically engaging in and using assessment evidence to guide decision-making.

Active Learners Need Interactive Teachers

Traditionally classrooms have been places for rows of desks with students quietly receiving instruction from a teacher. Students complete an abundance of prescribed activities at their seats. Teachers transmit information while students passively take it in (Stanford, 2003). Within this model, there is an unspoken expectation that “one size fits all” in terms of classroom instruction style (Burchfield, 1996; Eisner, 2004). There is very little challenge to higher level thinking (Pool, 1997). This picture may seem more appropriate for some elementary school levels, but there has been a trend toward pushing down this kind of instructional, academic-focused classroom style to kindergarten and preschool programs. The unfortunate result of this classroom style is that children are placed in a passive role that does not align with the way in which children learn best (Hirsh, 2004).

Young children are naturally active, social, exploratory beings and generally seek out opportunities to manipulate objects in their world. They are often so engrossed in their own explorations that they do not attend to classroom schedules, lengthy lectures, or even peers’ feelings. When children have something to say or something they want to do, their natural inclination is to satisfy their desires. This sometimes boisterous, self-directed behavior does not mesh well with restrictive classroom environments in which teachers expect a schedule to be kept and focused attention to be maintained. It is a common goal of early childhood teachers to want to instill some sense of order and adherence to rules in a classroom. Also common is the desire to increase children’s self-regulation, attention on learning, and focus on key skill-building tasks. Although these are worthy goals, they are not successfully achieved through a restrictive style of teaching.

Whole-group and teacher-directed instruction for extended periods of time most often results in teachers’ having to resort to restrictive responses to children’s fussiness. This perpetuates less child initiation, language, and active exploration (Cassidy & Buell, 1996; Girolametto, Weitzman, & Greenberg, 2003). Restrictive teacher practice in early childhood settings may control children’s actions and preserve order in the room; however, the cost is children’s initiation, deeper learning beyond memorization, and development in a meaningful, active learning process. Although some teacher-guided and whole-group activity is important in any classroom, these must be minimal to ensure ample opportunity for emergent, authentic, meaningful experiences that children can easily relate to their own lives.

Children’s motivation to learn is one of the single most important contributors to success in school and as a learner throughout life. Supporting children’s interests through active, hands-on experiences on topics that are relevant to children’s everyday life is an important part of facilitating children’s learning and development. Throughout instructional, free choice, self-care routine, and social times of children’s day, the quality of interactions with adults serves as a strong predictor of children’s positive learning and developmental outcomes. Interactions that are warm, responsive, focused on individual children’s strengths and needs, and supportively challenging promote positive outcomes in children as well as engender strong bonds.
Changing Demographics

As a first-year second-grade teacher, Brendon felt ready to take on the challenges of being a teacher. His school used a mentoring system, and he was paired with Sally-Anne, a 21-year veteran of the public schools. In one of their meetings before the school year officially started, Sally-Anne reminisced about the changes she’d seen over the years. “I remember when this community was a small farm town. The kids here didn’t have much sense of the world outside the town. In some ways it was hard to get them to imagine what life could be like elsewhere. But slowly, over the years, more and more people moved here from the city. Small pockets of immigrant families began to shape the community. Back then, we didn’t really have any plan for kids who didn’t speak English or who couldn’t keep up with the class. They were on their own.” Brendon couldn’t imagine such a time. With all the classes he’d taken that talked about the importance of making plans for each individual child’s abilities and valuing home culture, he was glad to be reminded of how far education had come.

Sally-Anne agreed. “At first it was hard for all of us. But we were lucky that our principals have been progressive enough to want to make change happen and that we were able to find resources to make it possible. So many schools still struggle today to make programs accessible for children with diverse needs. We all had workshops and formed collaborative teams to work on new ideas and plans. We started to rely on our parents and community to help us. Once they started to see they could have an impact on the advisory board, they really became involved. I learned a lot from them—even day-to-day things like new words in Spanish and Russian to communicate with several immigrant children. We became a team—real partners. Like I said, we were lucky. I know some schools that really resisted these demographic changes. In the end, it was hard not only on the kids but also on those teachers. They didn’t have anyone to rely on, no partnerships like we did. Now we see almost one third of the class representing different cultures and languages. I love being able to rely on parents to bring a richness and liveliness to our culture studies. I see my kids getting excited about the differences out there. It makes them want to explore their world and understand each other.”

Brendon was glad they had met that day. Sally-Anne reminded him about the beauty of their diverse community. She also reminded him about the importance of coming together as a community to create a responsive, stimulating, collaborative learning environment.

Valuing Diversity

Early childhood environments of today reflect the rich diversity of our communities. The need for teachers to continue to develop ways to create environments that celebrate shared and individual cultures is at an all-time high. As educators, we must begin our work from a place of respect, sensitivity, and genuine interest in knowing and valuing our children and families. It is important for their development now, but it is also essential for their development later as they move out into the world beyond our classroom walls. The diversity around us holds many opportunities to bring meaningful, authentic experiences into the classroom. Partnerships with families and communities allow teachers to expand learning beyond the classroom and more realistically mirror children’s lives. Sometimes
Part 1 • Foundations

Inclusive classrooms support active participation for all children.

Teachers avoid recognizing differences in an attempt to promote equality (“we’re all the same and equally welcome here”; “we’re color-blind in this room”); however, this does not actually value what makes each individual special. It is our rich diversity that makes life so interesting and colorful. Celebrate what makes each person unique while exploring the ways in which we share common experiences.

In addition to sometimes downplaying differences, teachers also occasionally avoid topics or situations with which they are inexperienced. Unfortunately this leaves teachers unprepared to handle situations when they arise. For example, many early childhood teachers are uncomfortable discussing issues of reproduction, gender identity, gender bias, or ethnic and racial biases in children’s behavior. They may not seek to challenge children’s assumptions about how children play, what kinds of roles they can play, or the materials with which they can play (for example, two boys getting married in dramatic play, an Asian child pretending to be a white cartoon character, or a child with a significant visual impairment playing the bus driver on the playground). Children are surprisingly astute at internalizing social rules and norms. As teachers, we need to be aware of certain biases in these norms, perhaps even in our own beliefs, and challenge them so all children become aware that they are empowered with choices and self-direction (Ryan & Grieshaber, 2004).

Equality and Equity: Everyone Has a Place at the Table

Educators have been advocating for the inclusion of all children in programs and classrooms for more than a century. It has been only a little more than a quarter of a century, however, that inclusive classrooms have become mandatory in schools. Today educators rely on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as a foundation for inclusive practices, but they go beyond the laws to fully embrace the spirit of inclusion. That law, dating back to 1975, has been reauthorized over the years to make provisions for schools and programs to address the needs of children with limited English proficiency and children who are homeless as well as children with disabilities (Gargiulo, 2006). The law provides guidelines for schools to offer intervention services, specialized staff, and
technologies to children who are in need of assistance to help them succeed in school (Bruder, 2010; Darragh, 2010). Of particular importance to early childhood professionals is the trend in the law and in models of high-quality practice that emphasizes the essential interrelationships between young children and their families. This translates into a call to provide essential structure and supports for families to be knowledgeable and meaningfully involved in all aspects of referrals, decision-making, service provision, and assessment.

In the same way that we believe in the value of diversity to enhance and enrich our lives, so too we value the unique contributions children at all developmental levels bring to the classroom. By viewing each child as an important member of the classroom with something special to share, we can begin to create authentic communities of learners who rely on and validate each other. When classrooms are viewed as a community, there is an opportunity for each child to feel valued. Communities are connected by the interrelationships of their systems, structures, and members. Within this framework, each individual contributes to the identity of the whole. Children can be unique and special at the same time that they are part of a shared culture. It is important for teachers to look for ways in which to encourage each child and family to have a role within the classroom community. A growing body of research reveals that children in inclusive classroom settings hold more positive attitudes about children with diverse abilities, especially when teachers take an active role in helping to facilitate acceptance and inclusion (Dyson, 2005; Nikolaraizi et al., 2005). This underscores the important role teachers play in promoting and modeling a culture that genuinely values diversity within the classroom.

An important element of valuing diversity is to view children as unique and on individual developmental paths. Not all children achieve the same milestones at the same time, just as not all children speak the same language or prefer the same activities or foods. Each child has capabilities to achieve meaningful goals. Our task as educators is to help identify what goals children are working on at the moment and to develop ways to facilitate their progress toward realizing their highest potential. Once again the partnerships with families and community support become important in this quest. When additional support and help are needed for individual children, teachers must be able to connect with the community resources that offer such help. At the heart of all we do, we must view all children as capable and always remain committed to finding ways to unlock each child’s amazing potential.

**Putting It Into Practice**

**The Potential in All Children**

Creating a class book is one way to highlight each child’s potential within the class as a whole. Children can create pages about themselves, what they like, and what they are good at through dictation, signing, drawing, writing, selecting pictures, and so on, which then can be combined into a larger class story. A similar classroom community project is to create a documentation panel on large cardboard sheets. The panel can include photos, children’s work, stories, quotes, and family notes. Viewing the classroom community as a patchwork of individuals coming together to create a unified whole can also be represented in a class quilt, in which each child creates a square with his or her family and unites them with others in a quilt at school.
Standards in Early Childhood Education

Quality early childhood programs are highly intentional about integrating developmental theories with important learning standards through active learning experiences. Standards, in the form of the Developmentally Appropriate Practice framework, Head Start Performance Outcomes, various state early learning standards, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and national content-area standards, seek to provide overarching goals for what young children should learn and be able to do. Many teachers struggle with feeling limited to teaching only to standards. This creates a limited view of children’s lives. In a time when we are recognizing the importance of the context of children’s lives and experiences—meaning that children learn and grow in a dynamic system of influences, including home, family, school, and community—teachers must understand how to use standards effectively as one of many tools for effective teaching.

Although it can feel limiting to use standards as a starting place for instruction, teachers can instead start with elements of good practice and fit standards into practice. Good practice means (Jalongo et al., 2004)

- understanding broad developmental trends while planning for individual development;
- balancing instruction to engage diverse learning styles and address all domains;
- creating environments that are safe, stimulating, and welcoming for children of all ability levels;
- meeting children’s basic needs for sustenance, shelter, clothing, and health care;
- encouraging processing and representation in a variety of ways;
- helping children make personal connections and find meaning in their experiences; and
- supporting families with respect for family diversity.

Standard learning goals within each domain or content area, such as math, literacy, science, or arts, can be successfully addressed in a balanced approach to teaching encompassing children’s play and interest-based projects. As noted previously, play is pure enjoyment for children but also a powerful vehicle for active, meaningful learning (Elkind, 2003; Fraser, 2007; Hirsh, 2004). It is through play that children are engaged in authentic activities stemming from their own internal interests, developing self-regulation skills within the context of a group, and building strengths in all areas of development. Here are some examples:

- Pretend play promotes social development through shared creation of dramatic play scenarios and role negotiation.
- Building with blocks helps children develop spatial abilities, counting, and shape recognition.
- Painting helps children learn colors, develops imagination and creativity, enhances spatial thinking, and develops pencil grip.
- Dictating, writing, and acting out stories promote language arts development (reading, writing, speaking, listening) and understanding of story structure, comprehension, as well as valuing personal experiences and perspectives.
- Moving water or sand in a sensory table develops children’s knowledge of physics, how different materials behave and change form, and sense of touch.
- Climbing on a play structure promotes physical development, coordination, and balance.
Skillful teachers tune in to children’s play and interests and prompt, question, provoke, and support the depth of children’s activities. While investigating interesting topics, children are able to actually apply emerging academic skills and learn more richly through firsthand discovery. These kinds of instructional practices robustly enhance children’s learning and development in individually meaningful, developmentally aligned ways. Furthermore, giving children space to choose activities and topics develops choice-making, curiosity, and initiative. All these goals are part of learning standards and, more important, are part of quality practice. When viewed as a part of the picture, standards do not have to be at odds with what teachers believe about the best ways to educate young children.

**Tools of the Mind**

Research on the benefits of play-based, constructivist approaches to early care and education is guiding current views of best practices. Based on the work of Russian-born psychologist Lev Vygotsky, the *Tools of the Mind* curriculum “is a novel approach emphasizing intentional development of specific academic skills and self-regulation of behavior and emotions with play featured in a leading role in the curriculum” (Barrett et al., 2008). Mental tools are strategies that children integrate into their thinking and processing that then allow them to become more capable to regulate themselves (thought, behavior) and their environment (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). Vygotsky valued language (a mental tool) as a pivotal tool in learning, memory, and self-regulation as well as a key component of how teachers can support, prompt, and challenge children’s learning (scaffolding their learning and development as they reach higher and higher levels of independence). Through the mastery of language as an organizer of
thought, children can learn to talk themselves through challenges, connect new ideas to existing mental frameworks, and elaborate on existing ideas to expand knowledge. Additional examples of mental tools include using symbols to represent something, creating rhymes to remember content, and aligning with rules and roles of sociodramatic play. When viewed through a constructivist lens, children’s play is seen as a key means for children to organize and regulate their behavior. We see this in the following aspects of play:

- Roles are defined and guide behaviors (pretending to be a teacher, a horse, or a mommy) and dictate actions.
- Rules are implied and at times negotiated and are based on play roles (such as rules about how a teacher behaves).

Furthermore, research has revealed that in play, children’s mental skills, such as attention, memory, recall, and imagination, are at a higher level than during any other activity (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). Connecting these important findings, the Tools curriculum guides teachers to facilitate children’s acquisition of essential mental tools through play, carefully guided activities, and systematic observations. With the strong connection between self-regulation and school success, the Tools curriculum has important implications for early childhood practice. For more information about this curriculum, visit www.toolsofthemind.org.

With the widespread adoption of the CCSS for K–12 by all but a handful of states, many educators are seeing an increased focus on standards and content outcomes. The CCSS are currently made up of two documents, one for English Language Arts and one for Math, and were designed to be a list of the most essential academic outcomes students in kindergarten through 12th grade need to know to be successful in college and career (Doorey, 2013). Efforts are also under way to develop and publish additional content area standards. The standards themselves are not a prescriptive directive of how to teach, and their creators promote many approaches to instruction (including play) as viable ways for children to achieve competence in the outcomes (NGACBP, CCSSO, 2010). These standards are, however, higher than many previous state standards in terms of academic rigor and focus on key differences in content such as informational texts and approaches to early reading instruction (Shanahan, 2013). Some educators are finding that the CCSS provide a helpful framework for instructional benchmarking. Other educators are experiencing stress and pressure of curriculum narrowing, inappropriate use of products and materials lists marketed as CCSS specific, and high-stakes assessments (Grennon, Brooks, & Dietz, 2013). Implementation of the CCSS, although specifically written for K–12, has important implications for those working with children from birth to 5 years old. Of particular concern for early childhood professionals is the ongoing worry about the inappropriate pushing of academic expectations onto younger and younger children (NAEYC, 2012). It is essential that providers of early care and education to children prior to school age participate in the ongoing dialogues about best practices in ECE (through third grade), the important place standards can have in our work, and appropriate ways to effectively ensure all children are having robust, healthful early learning experiences. Early childhood professionals are called upon to recognize that early learning standards (NAEYC, 2012)
• must include all developmental areas (the CCSS content areas are but two parts);
• are only one of many components of quality ECE (including teacher preparation and support, adequate program funding, equitable access, overall program quality, appropriate curricula, etc.);
• must work in concert with flexible, developmentally appropriate, and responsive instruction; and
• are able to be assessed through a variety of appropriate means.

Through diligent effort to understand and recognize the role standards play in our practice, effective early childhood professionals can take a lead role in advocating for and “pushing up” best practices in ECE.

Evidence-Based Practice and Data-Driven Decisions

Intentionality is a first and foremost requisite of effective teaching. Teaching with intentionality means that professionals make careful, reflective, deliberate decisions about all aspects of children’s care and learning experiences, including

• environmental design,
• material selection,
• organization of time,
• how children are grouped,
• activities and guided lessons,
• assessment tools and practices, and
• promoting family participation.

Many teachers are highly thoughtful in these decisions, but a true mark of intentionality is that teachers deliberately make evidence-based decisions in all aspects of their work. Evidence-based practice is defined as the process of making decisions for practice that carefully and intentionally factors in three essential elements (Buysse, Winton, Rous, Epstein, & Lim, 2012; Spencer, Detrich, & Slocum, 2012):

1. The best available evidence: practices that have demonstrated effectiveness through a number of high-quality research studies as reported in relevant, current professional literature
2. Professional judgment: defining situations, needs, and problems and evaluating potential solutions or actions based on professional preparation and knowledge and appropriate personal experience
3. Children’s family context: values, goals, and core beliefs of children’s families as they relate to children’s learning and development

Thus, evidence-based practice requires that professionals review current literature on effective instruction, consider knowledge of individual children and families, and use professional judgment and experience to appropriately respond to each child. Engaging in practice this way positions teachers as reflective researchers critically examining evidence;
assessing options; contextualizing actions within program, family, and community contexts; and making deliberate decisions with clear rationale.

Within the scope of effective evidence-based practice is the integration of systematically collected assessment data on each child. To make the most appropriate decisions for each child, professionals must consistently and regularly gather assessment evidence on children’s developmental and learning progress. It is only by gathering data on a variety of appropriate assessment measures that professionals are able to tailor instructional decisions to effectively support each child’s unique strengths and needs. Numerous tools and procedures are available to accomplish this:

- Developmental checklists
- Observation notes
- Work samples with notes on context
- Reports on completion of performance assessments
- Transcripts of dialogues and quotes
- Scores on appropriate tests or measures

The key principles in effective use of assessment data are to engage in a systematic process in which data on each child’s progress is gathered regularly (at least bimonthly), through only developmentally appropriate activities and that the assessment tool or activity be relevant to the context of children’s experience. Through ongoing data collection and reflection, professionals are able to use relevant data to make individualized decisions tailored to each child. Figure 1-5 shows the cycle of planning, teaching, and assessment.

One example of a school system–wide practice that emphasizes both a strong evidence base as well as ongoing data-driven decision-making is the Response to Intervention (RtI) model. RtI is a multitiered system of support, meaning that programs are designed with several levels of instruction and individualizing is embedded in each level and based on an assessment-instruction-assessment structure (Bayat, Mindes, & Covitt, 2010). Instruction is based on a research-supported curriculum and delivered deliberately through high-quality practice. Assessment is implemented with all children at initial, formative (during), and summative (end point) stages, and resulting data are used to guide instructional and service decisions (Jackson, Pretti-Frontczack, Harjusola-Webb, Grisham-Brown, & Romani, 2009).

The most popular tier model is a three-tier structure, which increases in intensity and individualization as a child progresses “up” the hierarchy, representing an increase in need for individualized instruction and support. The application of tiers of instruction is also flexible across developmental or educational outcomes and will vary based on each child’s functioning in each outcome (DEC, NAEYC, & NHSA, 2013). Figure 1-5 provides a diagram of a structure for RtI.

**BEGINNING THE JOURNEY**

As you move forward through this book, keep in mind your developing beliefs about teaching, your image of yourself as an educator, and the issues that affect the field of early childhood. Whereas some issues, such as use of technology, are uniquely modern issues, there are others that echo throughout our history. You are entrusted with the task of
continuing the dedicated march toward reshaping practice, improving professionalism, embodying lofty ideals, and empowering children and families.

Assisting you in facing the challenge are volumes of writing from centuries of thinking about childhood, learning, teaching, and society as well as our own reflections and experiences. The challenge for teachers now is first to inform ourselves about the voices from history—their messages, meanings, and teachings. Equally important is the hand-in-hand effort to learn about ourselves, our assumptions, our own beliefs, and our own personal histories through continued self-reflection (Landerholm, Gehrie, & Hao, 2004). Through this outward and inward learning, you must find your unique way to bring together the sea of professional knowledge and recommendations with your personal passions and drives. The work of the educator is at once both highly professional and deeply personal. It is about thinking, feeling, and doing. In essence, this is work we do with our heads, our hearts, and our hands.

Through this work, we can realize our ultimate goal of ensuring that all children live successful, meaningful lives. Each chapter presented in this text is a story, a voice from the field that shares new ideas and experiences. Let these stories inspire you as you begin creating your own story. Welcome to the journey!
You no doubt use any number of technological tools throughout your day and throughout your life as a student. You may not even really think twice about many of these tools. As an educator, however, you must make careful decisions about what tools are beneficial to children. For example, you may have access to computers for your classroom. Numerous games and educational programs are available for children’s use on the computer. Many programs call themselves “educational,” although this may not necessarily be true. It is your job to be a careful consumer of all the materials you select for your classroom. Many of the programs and computer applications work on skills that can be addressed in other, more active and socially interactive ways. Think carefully about why you select materials, always looking for the most active, meaningful, healthful choices.

Technological improvements have also come a long way in improving the experience of many children with diverse abilities. Hearing aids for children with hearing impairments, speaking devices for children who cannot speak, computer-driven wheelchairs for children with limited mobility, and digital picture boards are a few examples of the assistive technology tools that make it possible for children to participate in inclusive classrooms. Translation programs and bilingual materials that speak in multiple languages are also helpful for dual-language learners. Teachers should familiarize themselves with these tools to be able to better serve all families. I also encourage teachers to become skilled in using technology as a tool for their own use. There is a wealth of information (reliable and not so reliable) available online and through apps that can help you become a better teacher. There are forums where you can network with other educators across the world. There are ideas, plans, and strategies you can find to assist you in your work. For all of the valuable ways to use these technologies, you must maintain a critical eye and carefully select applications that best serve your children and families as well as being deliberate about when to unplug.

**Summary**

- The ages from birth through 8 years old define the term *young children* or the *early childhood years*.
- At no other time of life do we see greater leaps and changes in human growth, making early childhood educators profoundly important in children’s lives.
- **Early childhood education** refers to systems of education and care for young children by people other than family members in diverse settings outside of the child’s home.
- A key task of the professional is to hone the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to meet high standards of quality practice and to demonstrate these in a professional portfolio.
Your portfolio is representative of your professional identity and capabilities and may be aligned with one of several national standards frameworks.

Early childhood professionals take on several important roles in the lives of children and families, including the following:
- Teacher
- Researcher
- Lifelong learner
- Child and family advocate

Children’s play is a primary vehicle for their learning and development and is often highly complex and varied.

High-quality teaching today must reflect the diverse context within which children are growing and learning and value diversity and inclusion of each child and family.

Today’s high-quality practice calls upon professionals to be highly intentional about effectively integrating knowledge of development, individual children, community contexts, and appropriate learning standards to meet each child’s needs.

**CHAPTER LEARNING GOALS SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Use this chart to write down three to five key points for each learning goal that you gained from this chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify key highlights of development and learning in children from birth to 8 years old.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explore the scope and features of early childhood education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss the role and tasks of a teacher-education student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the complex roles of early childhood teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate important issues facing today’s early childhood profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize initial ideas about your professional identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPLICATION ACTIVITIES**

**Discussion Prompts**

1. Which of the many complex roles of the early childhood teacher do you feel most ready to take on, and which do you feel most challenged by?

2. What prior experiences and internal qualities do you feel strengthen your skills and dispositions as a teacher?
**In Class: Describe Your Favorite Teacher**  Think back to when you were in school—any age or grade. Think about one of your favorite teachers. What do you recall? What was it about this teacher that made you respond? Write a few phrases, words, or sentences to describe your memories. Share them with your class or small group. What common threads emerge? How do your memories and points from the class discussion fit into your vision of the ideal teacher—the kind of teacher you hope to become?

When I do this exercise with my own students, it is always the personal qualities that come through as the most memorable: someone who cared, someone who went out of his or her way for you, someone you felt you could talk to about anything, someone who felt like a friend and teacher, someone who truly wanted to see you succeed as a person and a student. Did you find the same thing in your memories and in your class discussion? Keep in mind your memories of your favorite teacher and the effect he or she had on you as you develop your own teacher identity.

**In the Field**  Create a list of questions about learning standards, managing a classroom, guidance strategies, and promoting success in meeting standards for all children (children with diverse abilities included). Arrange to interview an early childhood teacher to find answers to your questions. Choose a teacher who has been teaching for at least four years.

**For Your Portfolio**  As you begin your journey into this introduction to early childhood education, you might already bring with you years of experience and prior coursework, or this might be the start of your professional path. In either case, a good starting point for your portfolio is to create a brief autobiography, including basic information about yourself as well as a section describing why you want to be in this field. Once you decide on a specific portfolio organization plan (perhaps based on standards, your teacher-education department’s own framework, or the Child Development Associate content areas), your autobiography fits nicely into an introductory section along with a résumé and transcripts. Your autobiography is also a useful document to share with classroom teachers when you complete field hours or student teaching.

**RELATED WEB LINKS**

Association for Childhood Education International  
[www.acei.org](http://www.acei.org)

National Association for the Education of Young Children  
[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Council for Professional Recognition  
[www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org)
Historical Overview: People and Beliefs That Shaped the Field

The field of early childhood care and education has a long history involving divergent viewpoints, dedicated educators and theorists, and a pattern of pendulum swings in terms of popular practice. The study of how young children have been viewed, treated, and educated is rich and complex. It is entwined with the histories of social welfare, cultural movements, religion, and politics. This chapter provides you with an overarching historical backdrop to help you understand where we are today and why we believe what we do about best practices.

The backdrop of early childhood education’s past and evolution will help you understand the more detailed approaches, frameworks, and theories that you will explore throughout the rest of this text. The history of education is a bit of a rollercoaster ride, so hang on! Use the charts in Appendices A, B, and C to help you keep...
names, dates, and important theories straight. Think about what values, beliefs, and practices stand out to you as elements that may guide your own eclectic practice.

**HISTORICAL TRENDS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD BELIEFS AND PRACTICE**

Several hotly debated issues run like threads through the patchwork of U.S. early childhood history. At some times more prominent than at others, these are the underlying trends that have influenced practice. As you travel along the historical time line of this chapter, the following issues will be your traveling companions:

- The prevailing views regarding children
- The role of families, particularly women, at home and in society
- International theories, research, and trends that influence educational programming in the United States
- The effects of family income on early care and education practice
- Early childhood settings as custodial care (focus on keeping children safe rather than educational programming) or education; the goals and purpose of the programming

Think about children’s experiences throughout history as you think about what you want your own practice to be like and what experiences you hope to provide for children. The core beliefs about what to teach, how to teach, and who should be responsible for early care and education have shifted and changed throughout centuries of dynamic practice. Practice has been closely connected to how society perceives children and families in general and the role of societal systems in the care and education of children.

**LIFE IN THE 1600S AND 1700S: HARSH TRADITIONS AND NEW IDEAS**

In Colonial America, children were generally treated as small adults, and childhood was not necessarily valued as an important phase of life. Colonial American society generally agreed that children should be taught to read the Bible from an early age, initially at home with their fathers as teachers (Spodek, 1985). According to Colonial society, it was desirable to curb children’s sinful nature early in life. In 1647 Massachusetts enacted a law requiring the establishment of local schools for young children. These schools were often called dame schools because they were run by the women of the community (Beatty, 1995). The schools were places to care for children while adults worked and to instill piety through readings of the Bible. School activities stemmed from a desire to teach children the value of hard work, strong moral character based on religious beliefs, and trade skills they would use as adults (Hacsi, 1995).

**Influential People, Contexts, and Ideas of the 1600s**

By the earliest decades of the 1600s, philosophers and educators were beginning to focus their attention on early childhood as a distinct stage of life. Several key theorists emerged with ideas that countered the harsh educational practices being used in Europe and America (Matthews, 2003). Eastern European religious leader John Amos Comenius (1592–1670) was one of the earliest authors to produce a text outlining a modern system
of education for all children (Beatty, 1995). He continued to advocate for universal education, which Martin Luther (1483–1546) had successfully promoted in some European countries (Sandsmark, 2002). Comenius’s vision of education as a means to promote social harmony and end the war and political strife he had witnessed in his life reflected his deep religious convictions and commitment to working toward peace. He saw nature as a prime method of fostering children’s growth and advocated letting children play and grow in natural, harmonious settings. He was among the first to propose that young children had a great potential for learning and ought to learn through active means (Schickedanz, 1995).

Comenius also promoted the role of mothers—not school—as the best educators of children under the age of 6, and he wrote a guidebook outlining all the concepts, skills, and activities he felt children should be taught. Although his guide was quite specific in its details, Comenius nevertheless insisted that mothers individualize instruction because children develop at different rates, and he warned against excessive academics too early. Does it surprise you that some of these modern beliefs (individualized instruction, parents as the child’s first teacher, young children as capable learners) were being written in his book in the 1650s? Best practices in our field have come a long way, but as you can see, the historic roots run deep.

A scant 40 years later, doctor and philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) produced another guide to education that had a great effect on educational practices in America. Much of his work contradicted customary practices and promoted views of children that were more favorable, free, and playful. Locke strongly emphasized the importance of firsthand experiences as a means of learning. This viewpoint gave rise to the concept of experiential education, which is still in favor today. Locke emphasized the importance of education (less emphasis on innate drives) and proposed that children were like blank pages or wax that should be molded and shaped by experience (Henson, 2003). For Locke, experience was education.

Locke believed that the development and education of young children were best served by parents as educators. He advocated instructing children as young as 1 or 2 in literacy, but he cautioned that academic instruction should feel more like play to children (Beatty, 1995). He also encouraged parents to use children’s internal need for approval and guilt to manipulate them into desired behaviors, preferring reasoning with children to physical punishment (Hulbert, 1999). He differed from previous theorists in that his beliefs were more centered on children and less centered on religion.

The beliefs of Comenius and Locke did much to counter the negative view of children that generally pervaded the 17th century. The pendulum had begun to swing toward more favorable beliefs about children’s innate character. Fortunately for children, this trend toward a deeper awareness of the nature of young children and a respect for childhood as a unique stage of life formed the foundation for the vision of the next round of influential theorists.

**Influential People, Contexts, and Ideas of the 1700s**

For the romantics, or some of the enlightenment thinkers who permeated the 1700s and 1800s, education was a naturally unfolding process. However, it needed to involve careful teaching to come to fruition and to create balanced individuals who could operate in society (Kontio, 2003). Many people believed that children were best educated in rural settings through authentic experiences that were interesting to them. The following example illustrates the harmonious, respectful, natural education advocated by these philosophers.
A small child bursts forth from a little stone cottage on a sunny, green hillside dotted with grazing sheep. The child decides to fill the small trough from which the sheep drink. He knows the stream is through the trees behind the cottage, and he sets off. Once there, he scoops some water up in his hands and begins to make his way back to the trough. As you are probably already thinking, the water has seeped through his fingers by the time he gets back to the trough. His clothes and shoes are wet. He stops and looks at his hands for a while. His teacher watches from a distance, careful not to scold the child or direct him to the pail by the side door. The look on the child’s face shows that he is processing his experience, trying to formulate some kind of plan that will successfully achieve his goal. His gaze turns from his hands to the trough. He reaches out and touches it, feeling the wooden sides. The teacher patiently waits and watches. The child looks at his hands again, spreading his fingers. Slowly, he looks around him, searching for something more like the trough than his hand—something that can carry the water.

The child sees his teacher and approaches him. He tells the teacher about his plan and about his experience with the water running through his hands. The teacher listens. The teacher asks the child if he can think of anything he has used before to hold water. The child pauses. “A cup at supper,” he remembers. The teacher and child talk about the child’s cup, how it works, and what it looks like. As they talk, the child decides to look for something with tall sides and a bottom, like his cup. With a start, his eyes alight on the pail, and he runs off to give it a try. The teacher continues to observe the child’s self-initiated actions.

French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) authored influential books that spawned educational reforms in Europe and America (Beatty, 1995). His founding principles are seen as threads running through the beliefs of many prominent educators throughout history (Lascarides & Hintz, 2000). In one of his books, Emile, he proposed the radical idea that children were innately perfect and optimal development would unfold naturally without the corrupting influence of some elements of society (Null, 2004). Rousseau did, however, validate the importance of each person’s maintaining individual will while also promoting the will of society (Kontio, 2003). In his view, the individual learns to operate within and for the social group. Happiness is derived from individual freedom and the capability to develop attainable goals.

Although Rousseau’s book was fictional, it did serve as something of a guide in which he encouraged manipulating and directing children’s actions and thought indirectly (Procher, 1998). He took care to caution against exerting direct control and authority over the child, which would lead to anger and rebellion. The concept of individual freedom and aversion to dominance was of prime importance to Rousseau (Kontio, 2003). Rousseau validated children as pure, fundamentally different from adults, and in need of protection from corruption (Henson, 2003). He advocated that childhood be prolonged and reserved for activities of interest to children, not those imposed by direct adult instruction. Unlike earlier theorists, he believed that young children should not be pushed into academic instruction but rather be allowed to develop naturally and harmoniously (Null, 2004). Rousseau did not believe that mothers were capable of properly educating their children. Instead, he advocated that mothers turn over their children to male tutors for proper upbringing (Beatty, 1995). Here we see the first major pendulum swing relating to the parents’ role in young children’s education.
In another shift in perspective, Swiss educator **Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi** (1746–1827) focused on the welfare of poor children. His concerns grew out of the increasing industrialization of society and the dramatic rifts among upper, middle, and lower classes in urban areas. Unlike earlier theorists, he worked directly with children, experimenting with new methods (Schickedanz, 1995). Inspired by the romantic view of childhood, Pestalozzi followed some of Rousseau’s ideas and designed schools and curricula based on a holistic approach to teaching the whole child physically, mentally, and emotionally (Henson, 2003).

Pestalozzi strove to instill a strong community-minded consciousness in students and valued active involvement with the environment. One of his enduring innovations was a system of teaching that fostered learning through reflection on experience (Adelman, 2000). Growing up with few resources himself, Pestalozzi designed an original method of teaching children living in poverty that centered on several key beliefs (Null, 2004):

- All children are capable of learning.
- Learning begins at birth with parents as the first teachers.
- Teacher-student discourse and activities should focus on hands-on manipulation of real objects.
- Natural experiences in the course of daily living are the source of learning.
- Arts and physical education are essential components of a comprehensive education.

Unlike Rousseau, Pestalozzi validated the mother and home as the most natural learning environment and held a low opinion of schools for young children. He envisioned all children learning through hands-on manipulation of objects with loving, affectionate mother figures, a view based on his own early experiences (Bowers & Gehring, 2004). His application of concrete objects remains visible today with the many manipulable materials...
lining preschool shelves (wooden and plastic blocks, puzzles, and unit cubes). Although his initial efforts were directed toward educating children and mothers in poverty, his method became popular with all classes of society abroad and in the United States. Many Pestalozzian schools were opened in U.S. cities in the early 1800s (Beatty, 1995).

**Education in the 1800s: Kindergarten Is Born**

**Influential People, Contexts, and Ideas**

British educator Robert Owen (1771–1858), who shared Pestalozzi’s concern for impoverished children, became a pioneer and champion of educating children outside the home. He fueled the British infant school movement, in which he sought to create institutions where kindly teachers would encourage large groups of children to explore actively and amuse themselves. Owen also embraced beliefs about the importance of learning from nature and concrete objects. Owen’s chief mission was to create moral adults through education promoting cooperation and social cohesion (Beatty, 1995). He firmly opposed the harsh, punitive practices common in his day (Owen, 1999).

In the 1820s Owen became increasingly interested in spreading the infant school movement in America. One of the earliest intervention programs (like the Head Start programs of today), infant schools targeted comprehensive services for children in poverty as a means of social reform (Spodek, 1985).

A parallel social movement, which was developing in the United States at about the same time, was to have a great effect on the decline of the infant school movement (though infant schools continued to flourish in England). As social life continued to change with industrialization, the role of men as the economic providers and the place of women in the home became increasingly promoted as the proper family dynamic (Spodek, 1985). This shift in domestic responsibilities led many experts, as well as mothers, to reject the practice of sending children to schools outside the home in place of in-home education (Dombrowski, 2002). This family dynamic was possible for only upper- and middle-class families; many working-class mothers simply could not stay at home to embody this ideal.

**Divisions Emerge: Care or Education, Early or Elementary Education**

For working-class mothers who had to work to survive, day nurseries were the only option for keeping their children safe and off the streets while they were at work. Often organized by middle- or upper-class women, the day nurseries’ mission was to provide welfare and care to children on the days when their mothers were working. A pervasive attitude of blame was placed on these working mothers, who were often made to feel deficient (O’Connor, 1995). Also, the programs had no real educational goals, and a stigma developed over the social welfare–oriented programs (providing custodial care) versus education-based programs. This stigma remains today to some degree; however, today there is ample evidence to support the importance of quality, comprehensive programming for all young children. The day nurseries managed to remain an institution primarily because they filled a pressing social need.
Romantic views of children and childhood as godlike and of womanhood as the domestic ideal led not only women but also policy makers to reject including infant schools with public schools for older children. With the ousting of early childhood programming from the public schools, the funding problems began (and still plague the field today). Once again the pendulum was swinging as previous beliefs about the importance of early academic instruction shifted to a fear that it would do harm to young children’s development. It became customary by the 1840s to refrain from any reading or academic instruction until children were 6 years old (Beatty, 1995; Schickedanz, 1995). A familiar theme remained, however, which was the importance of good moral upbringing from infancy.

Amid this rocky period, one of the most famous and influential people in early childhood history began to make his mark. Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852) is best known as the father of the first kindergarten. Froebel’s initial training in forestry and his rearing in a strict religious home gave him a closeness to God and nature that can be seen throughout his educational philosophy and methods, much like previous educators (Lascarides & Hinritz, 2000). Indeed, translated from his native German, the name he chose for his method—kindergarten—means “child’s garden.” Froebel sought to build on previous theories and create a formal system of education for young children that would uplift human society (Adelman, 2000).

Laying a foundation that remains in place today, Froebel advocated a play-based learning environment in which children would actively engage with special materials he created, called gifts. Teachers were to observe and guide children’s activities, not to interfere in their naturally unfolding processes. The teacher’s role was that of a careful gardener, nurturing children as tender seedlings growing naturally and harmoniously (Lindqvist, 1995). It was through directed play that Froebel sought to keep children’s interest so they could become engrossed in learning activities with hands-on materials (Saracho & Spodek, 1995).

Froebel suggested 20 gifts and occupations and gave detailed instructions for their presentation and use with children (Saracho & Spodek, 1995), including the following:

- Solid, three-dimensional geometric shapes fashioned of wool and wood
- Flat shapes of wood, wire, and other natural materials
- Handwork activities such as weaving, sewing, paper folding, cutting, and modeling
- Gardening
- Finger plays, songs, and games

**Theories About Knowledge**

Froebel based his kindergarten on rationalism. In this view, knowledge is not derived from experience but is gained by logically thinking through concepts from a given premise. In practice, this is evident in Froebel’s method of having children work through prescribed activities with his gifts and occupations as the starting place. By working and thinking through prescribed tasks, children would acquire the knowledge that was symbolized in the materials and activities.
Gift 1: Six colored balls of soft yarn or wool

Gift 2: Wooden sphere, cylinder, and cube

Gift 3: Eight cubes, presented together as a cube

Gift 4: Eight rectangular pieces, presented as a cube

Gift 5: Twenty-one cubes, six half-cubes, and twelve quarter-cubes

Gift 6: Twenty-four rectangular pieces, six columns, and twelve caps

Gift 7: Parquetry tablets derived from the surfaces of the gifts, including squares, equilateral triangles, right triangles, and obtuse triangles

Gift 8: Straight sticks of wood, plastic, or metal in various lengths, plus rings and half-rings of various diameters made from wood, plastic, or metal

Gift 9: Small points in various colors made of plastic, paper, or wood

Gift 10: Materials that utilize rods and connectors, similar to Tinker Toys
Influenced by Pestalozzi’s view of the important role played by mothers in children’s education, Froebel also advocated strong family involvement. However, he preferred educational settings outside the home that served as extensions of the home. Here, mothers held key positions and status and infused maternal love throughout the school setting (Read, 2003). His repositioning of women in valued roles outside the home struck a chord with many upper- and middle-class women, who took up the cause of promoting kindergartens with great passion. Kindergarten programs began to open across Europe and spread through other continents as well. Froebel did not necessarily trust modern women’s abilities to raise their children properly, however, and so created a training program for mothers and teachers (Beatty, 1995). It was the close bond of mothers and children that opened the door for Froebel’s kindergarten method to find favor in the United States, despite the concerns about out-of-home schooling that had caused infant schools to fall out of favor.

A German immigrant started the first U.S. kindergarten in 1856 in Wisconsin. In fact, German immigrants started most of the early kindergartens, thanks to Froebel’s influence (Beatty, 1995). The early kindergarten programs and published guidebooks carefully outlined exact instructions for proper Froebelian methods, continuing the tradition of harmonious, natural learning instead of academic instruction. Although these programs earned some public attention, the onset of influential U.S. educators paved the way for more widespread acceptance as well as fierce rivalries between Froebelian purists and those who would change the kindergarten to fit American culture (Spodek, 1985).

One such American educator who became a champion of the kindergarten was Elizabeth Palmer Peabody (1804–1894). Inspired by the Wisconsin kindergarten, Peabody opened the first English-speaking kindergarten in Boston in 1859 (Swiniarski, 2005). She traveled to Germany, where she studied Froebelian methods, took her new knowledge back to America, and firmly opposed early academic instruction in favor of teaching through hands-on objects (Beatty, 1995; Peabody, 1999). Peabody adapted Froebel’s ideal child’s garden to include individualized instruction, in which she adapted activities to suit particular children’s abilities. Based on her wealth of experience with children, she believed children needed careful direction to develop fully (Swiniarski, 2005).

Assisted by the efforts of Susan Blow (1843–1916) to remain true to Froebel’s theory and practice, the kindergarten movement gained ground and implemented programs for children and quality training programs for teachers across the United States (O’Connor, 1995). Blow was particularly concerned about inferior teacher-training programs because she believed that qualified, quality teachers were essential for the continuation of the Froebelian kindergarten movement (Blow, 1999). Peabody created the American Froebel Society to regulate the quality and authenticity of kindergarten programs, and she advocated for inclusion of African American women in the new kindergarten training programs (Dombrowski, 2002). She worked tirelessly to provide educational opportunities for post–Civil War slave children in the South as well as Native American children (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

**Moving Education Forward in the 1900s:**

**Progressive and Developmental**

Over time, Froebel’s method became increasingly rigid and formal, so children’s activities were directed by teachers and by the self-correcting, didactic materials. Kindergarten practices still included play, but Froebel’s own writing that undirected play was frivolous...
and wasteful contributed to more direction of children’s activities, even their play (Lindqvist, 1995). This was the start of the “push-down curriculum” problems that are still debated today and that gave rise to the Developmentally Appropriate Practice statement and movement. The rigid practices that were taking over kindergartens led to criticism by new progressives and proponents of the child study movement, who were beginning to take their place as the leaders in the field in the 1900s.

**CLASSROOM VIEW**

On this crisp, autumn day, you are taking advantage of the new lab school on a nearby college campus to peek into the lives of children. The classroom is set up with a one-way window, which allows you to observe without the children’s knowing you are there. This is a real opportunity to see them in a natural setting. You settle in at the window and start to notice the room and materials. The most prominent feature, which takes up a large portion of the room, looks like a house, but in miniature. There is a kitchen area with a small wooden stove and icebox, a table and chairs, and a hearth. There is also a social gathering place with sofas and chairs. Children are busy acting out scenes from typical daily life at home. Some are making food, some are at the table eagerly waiting for a meal, and two children are cleaning up with small brooms. The children are talking among themselves as they act out this little drama.

You notice that the teacher has been watching them, writing in a notebook. She acknowledges two other adults in the room who are also interviewing a child and taking notes. They are engrossed in this child study. The teacher leaves her notebook and begins to interact with the children. She elaborates on their dialogues and asks the children if they think the table should be set for supper. Two children jump up from the table and run to get table settings. The room hums with activity, but you’re wondering about all this playing and whether the teacher is going to start directing the children on academic tasks soon. Later, when you have an opportunity to talk with the teacher, she describes her view on education as “progressive.”

**Influential People, Contexts, and Ideas:**

**The Rise of Child Study**

The 1900s mark a dynamic period of change in early childhood theories and practice. As the new millennium approached, discourses on education shifted from religious influences to more scientific approaches. Charles Darwin’s pioneering work in developing his theory of evolution significantly influenced the new social scientists who were leading the field of childhood development and education.

**G. Stanley Hall** (1844–1924), the first American to receive a doctorate in psychology, integrated Darwin’s ideas with those of the romantics and created the child study movement. His approach to education emphasized aligning the educational curriculum with the stages of development. He began the effort to elevate education into the ranks of respected science with his scientific approach to studying children (Null, 2004). Hall’s systematic research yielded volumes on children’s development and introduced classroom teachers to a new role as researchers. He also became an advocate for modifying the Froebelian kindergarten to align more with his developmental theories, for example, placing more emphasis on large motor development early as opposed to Froebel’s emphasis on fine motor skills first (Beatty, 1995).
Hall supported an interdisciplinary approach to working with young children that integrated supports and services for health and education (Hall, 1999). Through his observations of children, he voiced concerns about children spending too much time in classrooms, at the expense of time outside playing freely in fresh air (Hulbert, 1999). His concerns that schools were making children nervous and pushing them ahead of their time remain concerns today.

Arnold Gesell (1880–1961), a student of Hall’s, placed great emphasis on the developmental importance of the early childhood years and promoted the role of parents and teachers as researchers (Gesell, 1999). He emphasized the importance of careful, documented observations and made the university lab school a popular feature of the child study movement. The classroom visit at the start of this section illustrates the lab school in action:

- Observers making naturalistic observations
- Teachers chronicling their observations and using them to guide children’s education
- Researchers interviewing children to gather data on developmental trends

Much information was gleaned in these settings about how children develop and respond to educational environments, although the children studied represented mostly the upper-middle class. Gesell wrote prolifically about his research findings, pioneering the use of photographic research. His work defining the stages of infant development as well as his support of connections between home and school remain influential today (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). The child study movement was challenged by behaviorists (promoting education as habit training), who dismissed the role of teachers and parents in the research process and questioned the scientific integrity of the child study movement. Behaviorists, such as Edward Thorndike, sought more quantifiable data and devised the earliest standardized subject achievement tests (Trotter, Keller, Zehr, Manzo, & Bradley, 1999). The tension between educational psychology schools of thought continues today (Takanishi, 1981).

**The Progressive Era Dawns**

At the turn of the 20th century, another movement was afoot—one that sought to synthesize old ideas with new discoveries in an effort to move education forward. John Dewey (1859–1952) cultivated his role as one of the most influential contemporary American education scholars and popularized the progressive movement in education (Henson, 2003). Dewey was influenced by the discourse on educational philosophies of his predecessors (including Hall) and by Darwin’s theories of evolution. He valued the child’s psychological and social dimensions and believed that education should emerge from the child’s own unfolding development and interests rather than be rigidly imposed upon the child by the teacher (Matthews, 2003). He emphasized three key factors of education (Dewey, 1938; Powell, 2000):

1. Experience with authentic materials
2. Meaningful to the individual student
3. Based on problem-solving activities

Contrary to previous perspectives of early childhood programs as protective gardens, Dewey suggested that the classroom environment mirror society (Henson, 2003). In his
writing on the role of democracy in education, Dewey presented the idea that social engagement was central to the development of responsible citizens (Archambault, 1964). Dewey firmly believed that the environment exerts great influence over the child, especially the social environment (Antler, 1987). Furthermore, the disposition of the learner began to emerge as an area of concern for modern educators.

In addition to focusing on the acquisition of skills, Dewey believed that the development of a love of learning and a desire to continue learning ought to be the primary aims of the educational environment (Dewey, 1999). He believed that the intellect and interest of students were best engaged through collaborative, critical inquiry in an environment that supported the learner as a shared authority with the teacher. In his progressive view, learning occurred through the direct interaction of students, teachers, and materials in experiential, problem-solving endeavors. A key role of the teacher was to uncover children’s interests, thoughts, and feelings and to plan engaging educational experiences based on them (Hyun & Marshall, 2003). **Emergent curriculum** methods of today, such as the Project Approach, integrate Dewey’s ideas. The results of this learning environment were expected to be the raising of independent thinkers, fully capable of making meaning out of their world through critical inquiry, collaboration, and judgment (Gregory, 2002). Observe a classroom example of an integrated, hands-on project in this video.

Amid fierce rivalries over conservative Froebelian methods and more Americanized kindergartens, Dewey sought a balance between too much teacher direction and leaving children to go forth unguided in their education (Beatty, 1995). He advocated more open, unstructured play and careful guidance in developmentally appropriate activities, such as the dramatic play in the classroom view (Saracho & Spodek, 1995). Kindergarten teachers such as **Patty Smith Hill** (1868–1946) designed new child-centered, interest-based methods that integrated ideas from Froebel, the child study movement, behaviorism, and progressive approaches to education. Hill also laid the foundation for today’s National Association for the Education of Young Children through her efforts to professionalize the field in the 1920s (Bredekamp, 1997). One enduring belief promoted by Hill was the universality of early childhood education and the integration of all social classes together in the classroom. She lamented the loss of kindergarten’s strong social welfare ties as public schools became more and more involved, although she was pleased with the improvements made to earlier, more rigid Froebelian methods (Hill, 1999).

Despite Dewey’s view of education for social justice and Hill’s dedication to improving conditions for impoverished children and Native American children, many programs fell short of these goals. In relation to Native American children, the goals of education were to assimilate children into mainstream American culture at the expense of their home language and culture, a practice that is strongly opposed today (Beatty, 1995; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

As kindergarten methods progressed and changed, advocates of early childhood education continued to push for public acceptance and universal kindergartens. Many debates ensued as states slowly began to integrate kindergarten programs into the public school arena. Areas of debate included the following:

- **Methods and scope**—literacy instruction, play, and worksheets
- **Mission**—social reform, individual development, academic training, and first-grade preparation
As kindergarten programs aimed at 5-year-olds became more entrenched in public schools and universal in scope (and perhaps more narrowly focused on elementary education goals versus broader developmental goals), a new wave of early childhood programming began to rise: nursery schools for 2- to 4-year-olds.

**Assimilation of Native American Children**

As settlers moved westward across the United States, clashes with the indigenous people became frequent and violent. By the 1900s, Indian schools had been created by Protestant and Christian Anglos (European Americans) with the purpose of assimilating Native Americans and sometimes Hispanics into the new white American culture. The goal of **Americanizing**, which was regarded as a salvation for the so-called barbaric and savage natives, was to enable such students to step into the new society as fully functioning members. Children were removed from their homes and families to be raised in boarding schools or with surrogate white families. Their hair and dress were changed to match those of the dominant culture.

They were forbidden to speak their native language or recognize any cultural traditions other than those practiced by the new settlers. This “systematic programme of cultural extinction,” a common and accepted practice at the time, was funded by the government as a public service (Margolis & Rowe, 2004).

Natives, considered worthless, were dehumanized by how they were described and treated. The prevailing view felt it was necessary to erase all vestiges of the Native American to create a civilized human in his or her place. It was decided that it was less expensive to reprogram or reeducate the natives than to kill them (Margolis & Rowe, 2004).

The school programs differed from state to state, but it typically included occupational training for boys (farming and woodworking), domestic tasks for girls (cooking and knitting), and heavy manual labor for all children. Activities, including recreational activities, were strictly regimented to ensure complete deference to authority.

By the 1920s, however, the goal of assimilation to integrate Native Americans into society had been lost. The expectation for the reeducated Native American was not to find an equal, or functional, place in society. The new goal of assimilation programs was to train Native Americans (along with many immigrants) to accept their lesser status in a racist system (Hoxie, 1984). The skills learned in the schools would provide jobs as servants working for white families (Margolis & Rowe, 2004).

Slowly, beginning in the late 1920s, the culture of assimilation in Indian schools began to change. Public schools were encouraged (with financial incentives) to include Native American children. These schools began to include studies of native culture and arts along with academic subjects. The practices that had previously stripped Native American tribes of their autonomy, financial self-governance, and landownership were starting to change. The practice of corporal punishment (physical abuse) in schools was outlawed in 1929, changing the previous system of abuse that had run rampant in Indian schools.
Nursery Schools Emerge

In the years following World War I (1914–1918), concerns over a child’s overall welfare became a driving force for various organizations and agencies to come together to meet children’s and families’ needs. The nursery schools forming at this time, influenced by growing voices in the psychodynamic field, sought to provide caring and nurturing as well as educational programming. At that time, nursery schools, which served diverse populations, had roots firmly planted in social welfare for needy children. Once again integrating trends from international circles, the work of sisters Margaret (1860–1931) and Rachel McMillan (1859–1917) in London became influential in American nursery schools.

With backgrounds in social welfare and an interest in alleviating the challenges faced by children living in poverty, the McMillans created an open-air nursery school where hygiene; outdoor play; and active, hands-on learning were primary goals (Beatty, 1995). In addition to the emphasis on nurturing and welfare, Margaret McMillan envisioned nursery schools as fueling children’s imagination and curiosity. The sisters felt these were attributes children would need as future leaders of society (Spodek, 1985). Margaret wanted her schools to be lab schools where professionals from a variety of disciplines could explore new methods to influence their own practice (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, many nursery schools and teacher-training centers were opened based on McMillan’s insights. In her writing, she emphasized the effect that nursery school teachers have on the brain development of young children during the brain’s most plastic and formative period (McMillan, 1999). These words were truly insightful and prophetic in 1919, considering research on brain development and education have come to the fore just within the past few decades.

Amid the burgeoning Progressive movement and with more and more attention being afforded to the education of young children, two dynamic and highly influential women were poised to change the field. Firmly committed to validating children’s play as the most powerful force in their learning, Caroline Pratt (1867–1954) opened the Play

Active, meaningful, social experience develops children’s love of learning.
School (later renamed the City and Country School) in New York City in 1913. Her primary goal was to create an education system that would teach children how to think—to generate knowledge that they would carry over from the classroom to the world (Antler, 1987). Her philosophy of intrinsic motivation and education for oneself ran like a current throughout the school. Absent formal, teacher-directed, passive activities, children at the Play School chose their own paths. In effect, the children directed their own learning through free choice with materials and activities. The ultimate vision of the Play School was to engender social reform through education. Above all else, Pratt valued not obtaining information, but rather the process of learning information. This belief was also emphasized by Jean Piaget (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

Early in the life of Pratt’s Play School, a long and fruitful collaboration with Lucy Sprague Mitchell began. After many years of working in academic environments at the university level, Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1878–1967) became an integral founding member of the Bureau of Educational Experiments. She remains one of the most influential people in contemporary early childhood history. Through Mitchell’s tireless work, the bureau’s early emphasis became the exploration of experimental educational methods and philosophies. The bureau served as a lab school for the study of child development (Antler, 1987).

The systematic study of children’s growth was, in turn, used to inform practice and refine child-centered methods. Mitchell’s own interests in social reconstruction, the influence of friend and teacher John Dewey, and a personal fascination in geography guided her belief that children’s education in history and geography ought to stem first from their own life experiences. It should begin with the children’s own neighborhoods, for example. Overriding everything, she felt, was that education was about each student’s finding relationships—of concepts, people, events, or places (Antler, 1987).

Building on her lengthy work with and research involving children through the Play School, Mitchell embarked on an expansion bureau project at its new location on Bank Street in New York City. In the new location, a teacher-education facility was built with the lab school and research center. The goal was to develop teachers who would think—who would observe, reflect, and experiment actively in their own work and would value the social context of education (Grinberg, 2002). Today the importance of well-trained, educated teachers continues to be a key to the quality of education and children’s success. In fact, the training and level of education of teachers remains the top predictor of program quality (Horn, Caruso, & Golas, 2003).

Mitchell practiced education as both a science and an art, and she strove to instill the same commitments in her student teachers (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). The influence of the Bank Street innovations had moved beyond experimental schools and into New York City public schools by the mid-1940s. The once radical ideas and experimental practice of progressive schools continued to become widely accepted, mainstream elements in education (Sullivan, 1996).

**Education and Socioemotional Development**

As has always been the case, early childhood education has been greatly affected by various sociopolitical events. During World War II (1939–1945), public interest in young children was renewed for several reasons:

- Habit training and behaviorism were giving way to more child-centered, affectionate, nurturing beliefs about how children needed to grow.
Encouraging children to express their feelings became an educational goal.

More women were entering the workforce, giving rise to an increased need for out-of-home care. (Public views that mothers ought to raise their children at home still reigned, contributing to many guilt-ridden working mothers.)

As more out-of-home care opportunities opened for children, more women were able to find employment.

The increased need for early childhood programs translated into federal involvement in the form of legislation securing public funding for children’s centers in the areas most affected by the war efforts. More than 130,000 children were served daily, on average, in publicly funded programs at the time (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000); however, only a fraction of the eligible children were involved. After the war ended, much of the federal funding for early childhood programs did too. It wasn’t until the national War on Poverty campaign of the 1960s that federal funding was once again on the increase. The Head Start program is one of the enduring initiatives of that campaign.

The unique considerations for children’s emotional needs, especially during traumatic events such as war or family crises, influenced several researchers during the middle of the 1900s. **Erik Erikson**’s (1902–1994) life-span theory of socioemotional development remains a foundation of current beliefs about children’s personality advancement (Vander Zanden, 2003). Erikson’s theory has been used to guide interactions with infants and children. The early stages of his lifespan development theory are presented in the text box along with implications for early childhood professionals and practice. Young children are highly susceptible to the influence of relationships with adults in their lives, including families and caregivers. Consider the importance of socioemotional development in the early years and strategies for supporting development as you watch this video. Early childhood professionals must strive to form close relationships with children and always remember the emotional nature of young children.

### Erikson’s Life-Span Theory of Socioemotional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth–1 year</td>
<td>Trust vs. mistrust</td>
<td>Early experiences with parents and caregivers foster feelings of trust and security or mistrust in self and others. Responsive caregiving is essential. Give appropriate stimulation; respond to infant’s cues for nourishment, love, play, and sleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3 years</td>
<td>Autonomy vs. shame and doubt</td>
<td>Newly mobile, children seek to assert their will and control their actions. Supporting children’s choice-making and encouraging self-direction are important. Think about the toddler who angrily grabs a shoe, crying, “I do it!” This child needs to build confidence in his or her abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–5 years</td>
<td>Initiative vs. guilt</td>
<td>Children become curious and want to explore their world. Children need to be encouraged to manipulate objects and direct their own activities.</td>
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Another influential psychologist of the time was **Susan Isaacs** (1885–1948). Isaacs used richly detailed qualitative reports, mostly objective observation reports, in an effort to illuminate children’s development (Isaacs, 1999). She advocated the importance of...
Bank Street College of Education: The Developmental-Interaction Approach

Blending psychology and education (primarily Dewey’s theories) in the creation of the curriculum for young children, development and interaction were at the forefront of the interdisciplinary approach to education at Bank Street. In this active, hands-on, child-centered learning approach, all forms of interactions served as the basis for learning, including children’s interaction with

• peers,
• adults,
• materials,
• society/community, and
• ideas.

This led to renaming the program the Developmental-Interaction Approach.

Pervading all Bank Street’s work was the mission to foster a new collective society that would nurture all members—young and old alike. This often meant that student teachers were engaging in observation and volunteer work in the community. This mission also guided the curriculum emphasis on social studies—that is, of the experiences of human life across all disciplines. The research on children, practices, theories, and society—as opposed to being a separate entity within the school—ran as a thread throughout both children’s programs and student teacher programs. The research and innovations generated through Bank Street’s efforts contributed significantly in terms of theory-to-practice applications (Grinberg, 2002).

Lab School

Starting with an interest in researching innovative and experimental practices, Bank Street integrated a nursery school program into the organization’s structure. The lab school served as a place to study children, teachers, and learning environments as well as a place where student teachers gained valuable classroom experience. The nature of the curriculum was open ended, where children learned through play and work using a variety of materials.

Teacher Education

The teacher-education branch of Bank Street evolved during a time when discussions of politics and education were at their height. Although much effort was being exerted on the generation of theories and exploration of international approaches and influences, Bank Street became a leader in implementation and practice. Here teachers were inducted into a culture of learning through experience; student teachers were encouraged to approach their teaching as artists but also to employ a scientific approach to inquiry, action, and reflection. Above all else, the progressive approach used at Bank Street sought to open teachers’ minds to explore the possibilities in the complex social context of children’s lives. The faculty at Bank Street served as in-class models as well as teachers for the student teachers; students could learn through discussions with them and learn by watching them in action. Student teachers took a variety of classes in child development as well as arts and personal development courses.
applying the growing knowledge base in psychology to children’s education (Goswami, 2001). She also founded the Department of Child Development at the University of London in 1930, where her work, building on the ideas of Dewey, Freud, and Piaget, influenced methods aimed at promoting social and cognitive development (Aldrich, 2002). She endorsed the belief that children’s contact with the world around them formed the basis for their learning, de-emphasizing their internal constructive process (Hall, 2000). On this point, her ideas differed from Piaget’s.

Although learner-centered education enjoyed much support from educators and began to garner research support as well, events from across the globe were about to change the educational landscape. In 1957 Russia made headlines when it launched the Sputnik satellite into space. At this point in history, this “space race” represented technological advancements, progress, and national pride. The shock of being behind in this leg of the race spurred Americans to look for answers. Their attention and blame turned to current progressive education practices, which some viewed as being permissive and chaotic (Henson, 2003). The pendulum of popularity was swinging again.

In response, more scientific, skills-based approaches to education were embraced. One such scientific method, which gained favor in the early decades of the 1900s and, after a brief fade, regained popularity after Sputnik and throughout the latter half of the 1900s, was Maria Montessori’s (1870–1952) method. Montessori based her method on systematic observations of children’s spontaneous activities (Montessori, 1966). She then designed materials through experimentation and reflection. She was highly influential in her homeland of Italy and later throughout the world, and her methods have been influencing early childhood practices since her first early childhood school opened in 1907. The academic, skill-and-drill training emphasis ruled many public school programs until the introduction and enduring effect of constructivism in the latter half of the 1900s.

**Education and Intellectual Development**

Constructivist theories influencing practice today are grounded in the highly influential work of 20th-century Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget and Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky.

**Jean Piaget** (1896–1980) spent his long life studying children’s cognitive development, primarily through observation and analysis of children’s answers to problem-solving tasks. Piaget observed that children think in qualitatively different ways at different ages, giving rise to his stage theory (Piaget, 1999). Piaget wrote prolifically about cognition, language, intelligence, and children’s development (Piaget, 1929, 1954, 1969, 1975). His work has become a foundation for programs such as High/Scope, and it has inspired countless educators and psychologists. He proposed that children seek equilibrium, or balance, in their beliefs and understandings of experiences. New information is processed through assimilation and accommodation, which involve either fitting it into a child’s existing belief or by the child’s changing his ideas to accept the new information (Piaget, 1969). Piaget regarded these as ongoing cognitive processes, such that a balance or equilibrium at one point would give way to disequilibrium with more new experiences that challenge the child’s thinking.

You can see from this brief synopsis that Piaget valued the role of experience as well as the internal processes engaged in by the child on his or her quest to know the world. One important aspect of his work is that Piaget believed that both nature (biological...
growth) and nurture (people, experiences, events) influence development (Piaget, 1975). This both-and thinking, as opposed to either-or thinking, has become an important feature of current theory and practice.

Although Piaget’s work remains foundational, his theories have been challenged in some areas. Many critics believe that changes in thinking occur more as trends, not as steplike stages. Some also believe that the cognitive processing of infants and children may be more advanced than Piaget thought (Sameroff & McDonough, 1994). Proponents of emergent curricula methods, such as interest-based projects, also disagree with Piaget’s belief that young children are not capable of advanced thought sufficient to generate hypotheses and propositions (Hall, 2000). New research has shown that, with the help of adult guidance, children demonstrate higher levels of thinking at younger ages than Piaget proposed (Vander Zanden, 2003). Although they were contemporaries, the work of Lev Vygotsky has taken us beyond the theories of Piaget.

**Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development (adapted from Vander Zanden, 2003)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth–2 years</td>
<td>Sensorimotor</td>
<td>Infants realize the relationship between sensations and their motor actions. Infants reach and grab items they see; they put items in their mouths; they move their bodies to make objects move, such as a mobile. Around 9 months, infants also learn that objects exist even when they can’t see them—called object permanence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–7 years</td>
<td>Preoperational</td>
<td>Children begin to think symbolically. They begin to use and master language—a symbol system. Symbolic dramatic play, in which children use an item to represent something else, such as a block for a car, emerges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–11 years</td>
<td>Concrete operations</td>
<td>Children begin to think rationally, and they begin to be able to understand conservation—that while an item’s shape may change, the mass, weight, number, length, or volume does not. For example, a younger child will see a ball of clay flattened and think the flat one has more mass because it is longer. Children in this stage understand that the lump may be longer but that it remains the same amount. Piaget believed this happens because older children can reverse the flattening action in their heads and imagine the lump as a ball again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–older</td>
<td>Formal operations</td>
<td>Abstract thinking develops. Children can now think on the basis of hypotheses and propositions, not just on concrete objects. Children can master more complex scientific and mathematical operations using reversibility and reciprocity.</td>
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</table>

**Lev Vygotsky** (1896–1934) spent his relatively short life writing works that were not available to the public until long after his death. Political oppression in his native Soviet Union and late translations into English kept his work from the West for many years. Vygotsky’s ideas differ from those of Piaget due to his emphasis on the importance of
**Putting It Into Practice**

**Model Language**

During the early childhood years, children’s language arts development blossoms, including speaking, listening, reading, writing, and thinking. You can help facilitate this development by engaging children in conversations, by expanding their verbalizations, by repeating and extending their ideas, and by modeling your own use of language as a tool of communication and thinking. Talk about your thoughts. Talk yourself through tasks. Explain what you are doing. Show children how you use reading and writing in numerous ways in your own daily life. Keep the language environment rich.

Language development as a tool for facilitating and organizing cognitive development. More than just the primary vehicle for communication among people, according to Vygotsky (1978), language is the primary means by which children begin to organize their thinking. With the onset of coherent receptive and expressive speech, children begin to notice how people use words to share ideas as well as talk themselves through problems or think out loud, which later becomes silent thought.

This self-talk, which Vygotsky termed private speech, is often intuitively modeled by adults and, in turn, used by children. As children are given verbal cues, directions, or strategies from adults, they often repeat these or similar verbalizations to themselves while they work through problems independently. In this way, they use language not as a means to communicate with others, but as a means to organize their thoughts. Vygotsky believed that private speech was a powerful organizer that became silent and internal as children aged but continued to influence thought (Berk & Winsler, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978).

Firmly opposed to teacher-directed, habit-training modes of education, Vygotsky saw great potential for education to lead development within appropriate limits. His zone of proximal development theory suggests that each child has a developmental range within which he or she can be assisted in operating at higher levels than are possible alone. Key features of this theory include an awareness of the child’s independent ability, as well as what is beyond his or her ability, and the assistance of a teacher to guide, coach, and prompt the child’s thinking. This assistance, called scaffolding, changes based on each child’s need and current cognitive level. Scaffolding treads a fine line between offering too much help (too easy, doing it for the child) and not enough help (too challenging for the child) (Vygotsky, 1999).

Vygotsky’s work also emphasized the role of society and culture in children’s development, underscoring the social, group nature of education. This makes sense when you think about why a child raised in England learns to speak English, whereas a child raised in Italy learns to speak Italian. In many more subtle ways, children’s family and community culture affect the way they grow, think, and develop. Some cultures value group interdependence, but other cultures emphasize personal independence and self-reliance. These norms and values greatly influence the course of children’s development.
in all domains, particularly social and cognitive. This reflects an interdependent view of
growth and development that has great implications for parents and teachers. Current
constructivist theorists, including Jerome Bruner (b. 1915), continue to build on and
refine ideas about how children think, process and store information, and learn (Bruner,
1991). Bruner valued self-discovery as the most important process for learning, empha-
sizing that children should be given freedom and autonomy to explore their interests
(James, 2008).

Another influential theory that emphasizes the influences of a child’s cultural con-
text is Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1917–2005) bioecological systems theory. Bronfen-
brenner has suggested that children live within a system of influences at many levels.
The interrelationships among children, family members, neighborhoods, schools, and
peers affect the children’s growth most directly and profoundly. He also has suggested
that larger systems, such as government, broader educational systems, media, and larger
social and cultural beliefs, exert influences on children, although perhaps in less direct
ways (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Bronfenbrenner’s view underscores that children’s devel-
opment is influenced by dynamic, complex factors that are more or less directly based
on the child’s home and community context. As you read in previous sections, families
and children also influence society and policies, as in, for example, Head Start legislation
(which Bronfenbrenner cofounded), school desegregation laws, and the Individuals
with Disabilities Education Act.

Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal (or Potential) Development

The lower level of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is where children operate independently; the upper level children can do only with help (it is beyond their current abilities); and the space in
between is where children are engaged in challenging activities with the varying assistance of a more capable partner (Vygotsky, 1978). It is within this central area where learning and knowledge construction occur.
MODERN TRENDS IN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION: FOCUS ON EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

The multiple influences of families, children, and society are apparent in some of the events of our recent past. The history of education is full of inequities such as separate classrooms and even separate schools for different social classes, ethnicities, races, and abilities. Current laws and beliefs, however, call for integrated, responsive programs that meet the needs of each child and respect all children and families. Some of the most influential legislation affecting schools has come from the sacrifice; tireless work; courage; and blood, sweat, and tears of parents and children.

Political, Legal, and Changes in Practice Over the Past 60 Years

Against the backdrop of the growing civil rights movement in the 1950s, African American families raised their voices and stood up for the rights of all children, regardless of race, to equal schools. The landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas paved the way for the desegregation of U.S. schools. Included in the overarching equality movement of the last part of the 20th century, public policy makers, families, and educators alike sought to even out the disparities affecting children living in poverty.

Throughout history, society has looked to early childhood education as a vehicle for social reform. The 1964 Head Start legislation was enacted to combat poverty and to meet children’s diverse needs through comprehensive preschool programming and parent involvement. Other early intervention programs, such as the Chicago Parent Child Centers, which were launched in 1966 and run by the Chicago public schools, are enduring and successful examples of the tremendous positive effect high-quality programming can have on children and families (Reynolds, Miedel, & Mann, 2000). Providing access to quality early education has long been connected to efforts to reduce disparities in academic achievement that exist between children from higher or lower socioeconomic backgrounds as well as children from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Castro, Paez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2011).

The challenge in receiving an equal education faced by many dual-language learners (children whose home language is other than English) is an area that has been socially and legally challenged by families for many decades. The revolutionary 1974 Supreme Court case of Lau v. Nichols was filed on behalf of nearly 3,000 Chinese-speaking students in the San Francisco school system who were receiving instruction in only English. Although the schools provided some assistance to Spanish-speaking students, no assistance in other languages was provided. The case was based on the premise that, due to the students’ linguistic diversity and lack of native language support from the schools, the students were being denied equal access to public education as protected under the Civil Rights Act. The Supreme Court ultimately agreed, indicating that an English-only curriculum could discriminate against non-English-speaking students, even if unintentionally (Moran, 2005).

Continuing the work of breaking barriers to equality in education, families once again were instrumental in changing established practices of institutionalizing children with disabilities. At one time, children with disabilities were relegated to unsatisfactory programs or even sometimes to prisonlike institutions. After much lobbying, IDEA became law in 1975 and continues to be highly influential on today’s practice. This law includes provisions for equal access to education for children with disabilities. The law has been revised in recent years in an effort to continue the process of providing educational opportunities...
and full participation in the **least restrictive environment** for children with special needs (Turnbull & Cilley, 1999). This means that children with disabilities should be included in regular classrooms with typically developing peers whenever possible to allow them to reach their fullest potential. They may be included in regular classrooms with assistance or at times may participate in special classes, as dictated by individual needs. Listen to the professionals reflect on the progression of inclusive practices in this short video.

Our current educational climate is influenced by politics, which place an increasing emphasis on holding schools and programs accountable for children’s performance. The belief is that if schools and teachers are held to high standards and made responsible for whether children succeed, then the quality of instruction will improve. Accountability and standards have, at their core, the goal of ensuring that all our children have access to the very best educational experiences. While the underlying ideals may be worthy, the associated actions have not always translated into children’s best interests.

The quality of education in America has been at the fore of the political agenda and public financial responsibility since the 1965 passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In 2001 President George W. Bush included the **No Child Left Behind Act** (NCLB Act) in a reauthorization of the ESEA (passed in 2002). The NCLB Act sought to improve the quality of education and improve outcomes for all students, particularly lower-income students, by increasing the quality of teachers and the schools’ accountability for student achievement. NCLB addressed teacher proficiency by requiring that all teachers be **highly qualified**, meaning that all teachers hold a bachelor’s degree and state teaching license as well as demonstrate competency in the subject matter they teach (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a). NCLB sought to motivate education reform and improvement by linking school funding to student scores on achievement tests (U.S. Department of Education, 2004b). This kind of accountability has led to the term **high-stakes testing** where student test scores are used to determine school effectiveness.

The resulting pressures of unrealistic expectations and “all proficient or lose funding” high stakes led to increased time spent on narrow test preparation at the expense of meaningful instruction; increased anxiety; and reports of teachers and administrators cheating, misrepresenting data, or simply pressuring low-scoring students to drop out in an effort to increase overall school proficiency rates (Desimone, 2013; Verbruggen, 2012). However,
test scores alone do not provide an accurate picture of a child’s learning, and major conflicts arise from such practices with young children (Jones, 2004). As good educators know, fair and accurate student assessment, particularly assessment of young children, should include a variety of authentic assessment measures (such as observation) and be viewed as an ongoing process (Geist & Baum, 2005). Best practices in assessment of young children extend from best practices in early education: integrated, authentic, relevant, and aligned with developmental expectations (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009). As politics and practice shifted once again, a new take on the old theme of education improvement took shape.

**Politics Today: Early Childhood in the Spotlight**

In 2009 the Obama administration unveiled the Race to the Top (RTTT) Fund, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 2009). RTTT is a competitive grant program that emphasizes major school improvement and reform with special focus on improving student achievement in historically lower-performing students. Key provisions of the RTTT initiative include

- using standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- instituting data collection and tracking systems to assess and inform practice;
- recruiting, retaining, and supporting effective professionals, especially in higher-needs schools; and
- improving outcomes for currently low-achieving schools.

In 2011 a new focus in the RTTT initiative emerged as a spotlight focus on improving quality and access of early learning programs. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC) grant program is a joint initiative between the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services and provides $500 million in federal funds.
for states to improve early care and education, particularly for children from lower socioeco-
nomic backgrounds and dual-language learners (Kelleher, 2011). Once again, assessing and
tracking children’s progress are key features of the policy, though grantee states appear to be
proposing more appropriate practices this time. The focus for many states is squarely on creat-
ing cohesive systems and structures to support professionalizing and increasing quality. Devel-
opment and implementation of quality rating systems for early learning programs is a prime
focus for current early learning initiatives and includes important emphases on (Maxwell, 2012)

• family involvement policies and practices;
• connecting learning experiences across the early years (birth through third grade);
• addressing standards in all developmental and learning areas, including those for
dual-language learners; and
• observation-based tools to determine school readiness in children and preparation
effectiveness in their preschool program.

Culturally Responsive Teaching in Today’s Diverse World

Early childhood practice today requires that we continually strive to create learning envi-
nronments that align with changing laws and policies but also uphold high standards of qual-
ity and developmentally appropriate practice as advocated by professional organizations and
supported by our current research base. It is not an easy task, but it is of paramount impor-
tance for our children. Our task as teachers and advocates is always to find a balance among

• accountability for children’s outcomes in early learning standards as well as overall
development;
• authentic assessments and standardized tests and measures;
• individual interests and needs;
• developmental needs and appropriateness;
• integrated social, emotional, cognitive, and physical learning and development;
• divergent theories and expert beliefs;
• expert advice and our own intuitive knowledge; and
• strength and needs of ourselves, our children, our families, and our society.

Few countries can boast of the richness of diversity that thrives in the United States. Al-
though as a nation and society we have made great strides in realizing the centuries-old
dream of social equity and equality, we still have work ahead of us. Understanding and
respecting diversity is currently a top priority for all early childhood educators as we finally
embrace more culturally responsive practices.

Culturally responsive practices involve acknowledging and respecting diversity and
supporting all students’ unique family cultures. Family cultural context may be shaped by
many differences including language, ethnicity, race, ability, family economic status, reli-
gion, family structure, and family values and traditions. Current guidelines for quality
practice include the following research-based suggestions for culturally responsive teach-
ing (Castro, Paez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2011; NAEYC, 1995):

• Maintain children’s home language (which assists, not hinders, in learning English).
• Include a child’s home language in your classroom whenever possible (label shelves,
incorporate numbers and simple words into the class vocabulary).
• Use visual tools, gestures, and emphasis to encourage language learners’ comprehension.
• Invite families to participate in class activities whenever possible.
• Foster home-school connections, using translation software or community services when needed.
• Seek out resources and information that will help you understand and value individual cultures.
• Design classroom experiences that are responsive to, and inclusive of, each child’s unique family experience and context as well as each child’s unique strengths and needs.
• Give all children opportunities to represent their knowledge and experiences in a variety of ways (verbal, visual, kinesthetic, etc.).
• Maintain predictable classroom routines while being flexible as needed.

**CONCLUSION**

Along the winding road of the history of early childhood education, many prominent people have contributed, influenced, and informed current beliefs about best practices, particularly in learner-centered approaches to educating young children. We’ve certainly come a long way, but the road is laid out before us too. It might be bumpy in places and not well traveled, but ours is a profession built on innovation and a willingness to take risks and change practices for the better. Although we stand on a foundation laid over centuries, we are still pioneers ever committed to the quest of improving practice and life for our children. At the heart of all early childhood practice is the enduring belief in the worth of all children, the value of play as a means of learning, and the potential for quality early education to improve children’s and families’ lives. Our task as educators is to continue reflecting on our beliefs, challenging ourselves to improve practices, and dedicating ourselves to ensuring success for each child.

**SUMMARY**

• Throughout the long and complex history of early childhood education in the United States, there have been overarching trends that have distinguished various periods.
• During the 1700s in Colonial America, schools were designed to instill moral and religious values through the reading of the Bible, and at home fathers were regarded as the guiding influence.
• In the 1800s the role of mothers as the primary providers of child care came into the spotlight.
• As more women entered the workplace, the need for early childhood education outside the home increased, and early childhood education emerged as an important profession.
• European and U.S. educators in the 1800s called for education as a key to social reform and as a means of ameliorating the negative effect of living in poverty. This goal still remains important today.
In the 1900s new scientific views of the study of children and childhood took hold and expanded the knowledge base.

Many enduring practices and beliefs formed during the progressive era of the 1900s, including learner-centered programming, interest-based project curricula, lab schools, and teachers as researchers.

Amid the scientific revolution of the middle to later 1900s, education continued to grow as a science worthy of study and an important profession.

Early childhood education became a public concern as federal legislation was enacted to meet the needs of children living in poverty or with disabilities.

With the new century, accountability and standards took center stage and continue to be prominent aspects of early childhood practice.

In today’s increasingly diverse world, teachers must use culturally responsive practices to value each family’s unique culture and background.

**CHAPTER LEARNING GOALS SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Use this chart to write down three to five key points for each learning goal that you learned from this chapter.

| Identify overarching themes in the history of care and education for young children. |
| Discuss key influences on early education in the 1600s and 1700s. |
| Examine values about children and education in the 1800s. |
| Compare beliefs and practices in the 1900s, and make connections to present-day practice. |
| Explore early childhood best practices in the context of today’s diverse world. |

**APPLICATION ACTIVITIES**

**Discussion Prompts**

1. What are your beliefs about the innate nature of children? How should children learn, and how should they be taught?
2. Do you think parents or schools are best equipped to care for and teach their infants, preschoolers, and school-age children?
3. What do you believe should be the primary goals and functions of early childhood programs?
In Class  In small groups, create a time line of events, beliefs, and people to represent the history of early childhood education. You can select highlights from the chapter—key people and theories that show change and trends throughout time. You do not have to include every name and date. Use whatever materials you have available. Here is your chance to make the sometimes dry reading of history more lively and colorful.

In the Field  Visit an area child care center or school, or visit the center or school’s Web site. Arrange to interview the program director or school administrator. While exploring the site, find the program’s mission. Ask the administrator to explain the school’s philosophy, mission, and prevailing views of children and families. Make notes about your impressions of how the environment supports the responses. For example, a center that speaks of the importance of family involvement in children’s education might have a parent bulletin board, family resource room, family welcome space, and the like. What visible signs do you see of the philosophy, mission, and view of children? Write a brief reflection paper that summarizes the interview responses, includes the school’s mission, and presents your perspective and impressions, integrating your thoughts on the chapter opening and closing questions about early childhood programs. Include any brochures or other literature that are available to you on your visit or from the Web site.

For Your Portfolio  This activity could be used as an artifact in your portfolio under knowledge of the field or development. Throughout this journey through history, there were swings in beliefs and practice related to the following issues. For each issue, write a brief statement about your own beliefs, including what influenced them.

- The prevailing views of children and how children develop and learn
- The role of families, particularly women at home and in society
- International philosophers or educators and trends influencing American programming
- Effects of socioeconomic class divisions on programming
- Early childhood settings as custodial care or education
- The goals and purposes of the programming

RELATED WEB LINKS

History of American Education Web Project
www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cfrnb/index.html

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History
www.gilderlehrman.org/teachers/modules.html

Info USA
usinfo.org/enus/education/index.html