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Early Childhood Education
FOURTH EDITION

Early Childhood Education

Birth–8

The World of Children, Families, and Educators

Amy Driscoll
Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement of Teaching

Nancy G. Nagel
Lewis and Clark College

Pearson

Boston • New York • San Francisco
Mexico City • Montreal • Toronto • London • Madrid • Munich • Paris
Hong Kong • Singapore • Tokyo • Cape Town • Sydney
Nancy dedicates this fourth edition of the book to her husband, Ralph, and sons Marc and Scott Nagel with appreciation for their encouragement to live life boldly. She also extends her acknowledgment to her colleagues at Lewis and Clark College.

Amy dedicates this writing to her mom, Virginia Smith, and to her grandchildren—Keeley, Riku, Keesha, Augustus, and Anna—who consistently inspire her work and teach her life’s lessons.
Amy Driscoll recently retired from California State University, Monterey Bay, as Director of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. Previously, she was Professor of Early Childhood Education, Coordinator of Child and Family Studies, and Director of Community/University Partnerships at Portland State University. Amy served on the national governing board of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in leadership positions in Texas and in Utah in the Association for the Education of Young Children, as President of California’s Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators, and as a regional representative to the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators.

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This fourth edition has been written to provide you with a comprehensive introduction to the profession of early childhood education. Children and their families, as well as the educators who play important roles in their lives, will greet you as you explore the world of early childhood education. The stories in this book are about real individuals because they are the best way for you to learn about the broad scope of our profession. You will meet and observe them in their homes, their neighborhoods, and the various programs where the children spend their days. The children and families represent diverse ethnic and cultural heritages, family configurations, and beliefs and assumptions about child raising and education. The early childhood educators represent a range of professional roles, early childhood programs, and philosophies about child development and education.

Throughout the chapters, we encourage you to observe children, families, and early childhood educators and to learn from them. Observations take the form of brief vignettes in the beginning chapters and extended cases in later chapters. The cases and vignettes provide a shared and common observation for you to process together with your peers, through class discussions and reflective writing. In the constructivist tradition, we encourage you to create your own knowledge and understanding of early childhood education as you reflect on your observations. A very important message we hope to communicate is that children and families are the most important source of information for the thinking, planning, decision making, and teaching in which you will engage in the future.

Be sure to review the inside front cover of this book. It will help you navigate the book using the icons for curriculum, guidance, assessment, and family communication and involvement. An icon for journal reflections signifies questions or prompts to encourage you to write or discuss your impressions about each chapter’s contents. Notice our other features—A Closer Look and A Conversation about Inclusion. Finally, at the end of each chapter, there are suggestions for Your Professional Portfolio and Your Professional Library as well as a description of Your E-Resources that come with this text.

You may be wondering, What is unique about this book? or What makes this text different from all the other choices out there? or Why did my instructor choose this book for my class? One answer has to do with our choices of early childhood settings for you to visit as you read our book. We carefully selected centers and classrooms that exemplify the best practices in the profession. Some readers might contend that the programs in our chapters are ideal, and that is exactly our intention. We believe that beginning professionals, like you, need to observe and study the very best programs available so that you build your knowledge and understandings from excellent examples. Soon enough in your professional development you will realize that there are plenty of examples that contradict what you are learning about children and families. You will witness practices that do not seem right for children and that are not sensitive to families. In our combined (about 50) years of working with preservice teachers, we have never heard our students ask for an example of what not to do. Instead, our students have typically asked where they can observe the kind of programs they read and hear about—programs that exemplify the child development theories and research that they have been studying. We had those requests in mind when we wrote this book. We visited the kinds of places our students have longed to observe, and we described what we saw and heard as authentically as possible. The programs and professionals that we selected model what we are trying to teach through this text. We listened for the kind of thinking and decision making that we encourage you, a beginning professional, to prepare to do. Our hope is that you will delight in getting to know the real children, families, and educators in our book and will find them a rich source of insights and understandings, and that the programs you visit
with us will help you envision what is possible for children and families and bring you inspiration for your future work.

New to This Edition

In the fourth edition, we have carefully selected new video clips in MyLabSchool to correspond to your reading in each chapter; these clips model good practices and provide a window into real early childhood settings. We hope that these will help you gain more insight into your future profession.

You may be asking, What new information will I find in this book? and What kind of changes have been made from the last edition? First, we want you to know that a number of early childhood professionals reviewed the first, second, and third editions to assess how well the text works for your introductory courses in early childhood education. They examined the contents for clarity, for missing information, and for ways to make the information relevant for your experiences. In response to their reviews, we have developed several new areas of emphasis in this edition. They include the following:

- Increased attention to current issues affecting young children—stress, obesity, and fears prompted by war and terrorism, and their implications for children’s play and ECE curriculum.
- More description of how technology is used in early childhood programs to appropriately support children’s development and learning.
- Increased coverage of physical/motor skills, outdoor play spaces and activities, and health and safety issues for children’s development, play, curriculum, and learning.
- In-depth reviews of recent developments in brain research and studies of bilingual children.
- The most current approaches to cultural diversity and anti-bias curriculum.
- Findings from the latest research on children’s development in the arts and classroom activities to support that development.
- Examples and descriptions of national and state curriculum standards in appropriate disciplinary areas.
- In-depth descriptions of Reggio Emilia and other programs outside of the U.S.
- A comprehensive picture of diverse families in the United States and current trends in family configurations. Included are the latest data on family health coverage, stress, poverty, and homelessness.
- Information about the latest Head Start changes in policies and practices.
- Expanded description of preschool programs with curriculum examples.
- Discussion of the current social and economic implications of political decisions about funding and policies for programs for young children and families.
- The Your E-Resources section at the end of the chapter refers you to specific video clips on MyLabSchool (www.mylabschool.com) that correspond to chapter content.

We hope that these changes will make this fourth edition even more useful for your professional preparation for your future role as an early childhood educator.

Throughout the chapters, we urge you to take an active role in your own professional development and to begin the observations, reflections, and decision making that characterize a professional. We sincerely hope that after reading this book, your continuing study and preparation will build on and expand the experiences we have shared together in this text. *Early Childhood Education, Birth–8* is designed to provide an overview of the content to be studied by an early childhood professional. It is important to note that further and intensive development in many of the content areas is needed. The best example is the study of child development. This book contains a chapter that describes typical development from infancy to age 8, a chapter that explains major theories of development, and various cases of children of different ages to highlight the development typically observed at each age. We do not consider those chapters and cases sufficient content for the extensive study of child development that is critical for the early childhood professional.
We strongly urge you to use the content of this text as foundational information and to build on the ideas and concepts in future courses and experiences.

Supplements to the Text

To extend and support learning with *Early Childhood Education: Birth to 8*, Fourth Edition, a number of supplements have been created for students and instructors. Professors, please contact your local Allyn & Bacon representative about obtaining these supplements for your course.

- **INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL WITH TEST BANK.** A manual containing detailed chapter outlines, in-class discussion starters, suggested research assignments and group projects, recommended field experience activities, essay questions about videos in MyLabSchool, and varied types of test questions are available to instructors who adopt this text.
- **COMPANION WEBSITE.** Found at [www.ablongman.com/driscoll4e](http://www.ablongman.com/driscoll4e), this site provides web links, practice tests, and essay questions for each chapter and an essay question for the corresponding MyLabSchool video clips.
- **POWERPOINT™ PRESENTATION.** Designed to include most tables and figures from the text within the outline of key points for the book, these slides for each chapter may be downloaded from *Instructor Resource Center* and customized by instructors who adopt this text.
- **THEMES OF THE TIMES READER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.** This collection of 46 *New York Times* articles, selected by Amy Driscoll and Nancy Nagel, reflect the current issues facing early childhood educators, young children, and their families. Major topics include trends in preschool enrollment, reading and math in early childhood, assessment, technology and infants, nutrition in schools, the effect of socioeconomic status on child development, and playground safety.

Found at [www.mylabschool.com](http://www.mylabschool.com), this rich website for future teachers contains hundreds of video clips, including 42 video clips looking at children and teachers in various early childhood settings, a portfolio and lesson builder tool with state and national standards, cases, and hundreds of articles from major education journals. Resources in this site are also correlated to the text in end-of-chapter activity boxes. The website is available to students when instructors order the access card packaged with the text, or by purchasing access on their own. Visit the homepage of the site to learn more.

Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge those early childhood professionals who assisted our writing by welcoming us to their centers and schools, by interpreting their programs, by discussing their beliefs and practices, and by introducing us to the children and their families. We are grateful to the following families and early childhood professionals: Robin Lindsley, Francis and Akosa Wambalaba and family, Luke and George Kolln, Margaret Browning, Sue Patterson, Kristine Digman, Faridah Haron and Ibrahim, Ellie Justice and the staff of Helen Gordon Child Development Center, Carolyne Westlake, Susana Grandjean, Vicki Lawry, Tim Lauer, Candace Beck, Joy Lee, Nancy Johnson-Dorn, Alejandra Favela, Terri Wheeler, and Herb Martin.

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What Is Early Childhood Education?
Chapter Focus

When you finish reading and reflecting on this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Describe a range of diverse early childhood education settings for young children and varied professional roles for working with those children and their families.
2. Describe some of the qualities possessed by an early childhood professional and conduct a self-assessment related to the professional role.
3. List the basic competencies needed by an early childhood professional.
4. Understand some of the major events and philosophies of the history and development of the early childhood education movement and profession.
5. Develop an initial plan for your own professional development of knowledge and skills.

“I

Individuality is a concentration of the whole world at the site of an individual” (Sewell, 1995, personal communication). The concept of individuality guides us as we begin this writing. Our hope is that it guides you as you prepare to care for children and their families. As we listen to the voices of society, we hear a yearning for community, a hope for relationships, and a sigh of isolation. In our work with young children and their families, we have the opportunity to respond to the yearning—to provide loving support, to model cooperation, and to build partnerships. As we participate in your professional development with this writing, we have similar opportunities and we will work to build a relationship with you as you read.

Building a Community of Early Childhood Professionals

We hope to interact with you as you develop your own early childhood education community. We welcome you to a profession of committed, caring, and competent individuals. This text is possibly different from other books you are using or have studied in the past, so we will describe how we intend to teach and mentor you as you begin your professional development.

A Text of Stories

We have chosen stories as a way of communicating with you in this book. As educators, we have learned that “when storytelling occurs, interpersonal collaborations, learning relationships, and connections are created” (Mello, 2001, p. 12). We think that stories build community and we want to begin to connect you to the early childhood educators’ community. We intend to create the kind of community of learners that reflects both individually and collectively (Stremmel, 2005)—the kind of community that we hope you will have when you finish your preparation and begin your role with children. You
will discover, or maybe you already have, that storytelling has long been recognized for its impact on young children’s development (Cooper, 2005) and we think that it has significant influence on adults too. Story narratives are one of our human ways of making meaning, and as teachers, our stories are meant to “guide, focus, and reassure” (Mello, 2004, p. 8) you, our students. Just as stories promote understanding of self, respect for diversity, empathy, and positive values in children (Feeney & Moravcik, 2005), our stories are intended to promote some of those same outcomes for our readers. In addition, stories are also easier to remember than other forms of information and we hope that you will remember the ideas of this book by recalling the stories.

We urge you to listen to our stories and picture yourself meeting the children and families, listening to their conversations, and feeling the spirit of their activities. Leave your surroundings and put your issues aside when you read. Put yourself into the homes and neighborhoods and schools so that your senses can experience the sights and sounds and scents. You will meet an infant named Luke and his dad, and will learn about Luke’s family’s concerns regarding his time in child care. A toddler named Ibrahim, whose parents are from Malaysia and Egypt, will stun you with his trilingual abilities. At a rural Head Start center, you will enjoy Felipe and his preschool activities. You will also visit his home and get acquainted with his mom and grandmother, who take such good care of him. You will fall in love with Keeley, who attends kindergarten in a public school for the arts. You will find yourself empathizing with her single mom and beginning to understand the challenges of raising a child alone. Erin Cheyenne is a surprisingly articulate 7-year-old whose parents have chosen to “home school” her until second grade. She and her parents will teach you much about what education can be. Finally, you will delight in Jodie, a 6-year-old who was diagnosed with Down syndrome at birth and who has tremendous ability to care for others. She also attends a public school and spends her day in an inclusive classroom that blends first and second grades. Her family will welcome you to their home and you will have the opportunity to hear their stories. You will also become acquainted with three brothers, Chimieti (7 years old), Otioli (5 years old), and Wamalwa (2 years old), and their parents from Kenya, as well as Angela Russo and her mom in Brooklyn, New York, who will introduce you to the community of professionals who help raise Angela. In addition to these children, you will meet the many children that we have encountered and observed during our combined 50 years of experience in classrooms and programs of all types.

Erin Cheyenne, Jodie, Keeley, Felipe, Ibrahim, and Luke are all real children, and their families were kind enough to let us share their stories with you. In a way, their conversations provide an opportunity for you to get to know them and us and our experiences with children. As you read the chapters, think about the children and families that you know and apply the ideas to their situations. That’s just one suggestion for how to read our text.

Your Role in Reading This Book

As we tell the stories of this book, we promise to let you in on our thinking—what is going on in our heads. Since we won’t be able to talk face to face, our intent is for our communication to be as clear as possible. We also want to interact with you. Get yourself a journal to use with this book—keep it nearby whenever you read these chapters. We will be posing questions, asking you to list ideas, and urging you to write what comes to mind when you hear or see the situations described in these chapters. Whenever you see the notebook symbol, we expect you to think about and write your ideas before going on with your reading. If learning is active, understanding and memory are enhanced. Your participation (writing your thoughts) when you see the journal symbol will help you take an active learner role.

We do not intend to provide information for you to memorize or to answer every question we ask. When we tell stories or describe classroom situations, we often focus on curriculum and guidance. When you see the Curriculum symbol, it means that the
WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

story is about curriculum. When you see the Guidance symbol, it means that the story is about guidance strategies. When you see the Assessment symbol, it means that the educator is using assessment strategies. When you see the Family symbol, it means that the educator is communicating with or involving families. We will tell stories, describe situations, and observe children and adults with you. We might ask you questions about topics that will require you to draw from your lifetime of experiences. Rather than tell you the “right” way to do things, we will provide as many options as possible. Then we will ask you to respond—to predict, to analyze, or to make recommendations. Sometimes we will ask you to reflect—to feel, to integrate ideas with your own experiences and beliefs, or to consider multiple perspectives or varied issues. We want you to make choices and to construct your own understanding. That is exactly the way we believe in teaching children, and we feel strongly that you should have the same kind of learning experience.

Teaching is a decision-making role, and we hope you will begin forming opinions and making decisions now, as you read this book and start your own professional development. In order to make all the decisions that teaching demands, you must first become a reflective observer—someone who watches and listens well and then questions what was seen and heard. We urge you to be the kind of teacher who is both alert to your own inner voice as well as to the world around you, to develop such an awareness that it becomes who you are as you work with children. Stremmel (2005) urges us to “live attentively, being alert and aware of our own joys, struggles, questions and relationships with others” (p. 376) so that we don’t miss opportunities to be present for ourselves and children, and for opportunities to change.

Meet an Early Childhood Professional

We will begin by introducing you to a friend who is an outstanding early childhood education professional. It might be helpful for you to meet a real person who has the professional qualities we encourage you to develop. Robin is definitely a decision maker and a reflective observer—the ultimate early childhood professional. When you meet her later in this chapter, you will see her in a blended first/second-grade classroom in a public school.

Robin can be seen at every workshop or professional meeting that is scheduled—mostly in a very involved role. She questions her practices frequently and publicly. We still remember when she began questioning her morning calendar routine and the developmentally appropriateness of it for her first-graders. Morning calendar routines have been done by early childhood teachers for years and years, and most everyone just unhesitatingly accepted the practice. Not Robin! She questioned others about the value of the routine and asked herself about how well it matched the development of her children, then she made her decision. She decided to abandon the morning calendar routine, with its rote chorus of month, day, and year, because it had little meaning for her children. Robin is a risk taker in her work with children. She had 14 literacy centers in her classroom and was practicing whole language approaches long before we heard of the term. She blended her first- graders with the previous class of first-graders (now second-graders) after much studying and thinking, but before it became popular to mix different-aged children in groups.

The dining room table in Robin’s home is never free of the most current children’s books, latest curriculum materials, or stacks of recycled materials (for her construction center) she collects with a passion. If you talk with her, you find that she has read the latest book or journal about early childhood education. Most of us would like to slow her down a little—we worry about her burning out. Her human side is strong and her energy is boundless. Robin connects with others in a variety of other contexts—music, theater, antiquing, cooking, walks, and dancing. She also is a Big Sister and a member of her local church women’s group.

The important quality we see in Robin is that she never finishes learning. She questions and probes all of the time. She does not accept every new approach that comes along,
but she is curious. She consistently seeks improvement in what she does with children. Robin also serves as an advocate for children and families as well as for teachers. She has spoken to the legislature on behalf of children and teachers, and she has held offices in all of the major professional associations.

Recently, Robin received a prestigious national award for being an outstanding teacher. The award came with a generous amount of money, and with those funds, Robin opened *A Teacher’s Space* in collaboration with her many early childhood educator friends. It is a storefront space with commercial materials for sale, a library, a workroom for laminating and producing materials, bins and bins of free recyclable materials, a meeting room for workshops and classes, and a place to relax and talk with other teachers.

Robin is exceptional but she is not the exception. You will meet many exciting early childhood professionals as you prepare to be one yourself. Some of them will be introduced to you in this book.

**JOURNAL 1.1**

Before joining our community, stop and think about your decision to take this course or begin your study in education. What are you thinking? How do you feel about making this decision? Why have you decided to study early childhood education?

Make a commitment right now to read this text with a questioning approach. Read the stories and practice being a reflective observer. Be actively involved in your learning and in getting to know yourself. As we describe your options in early childhood education, try to visualize yourself working in the different programs—in other words, do some personal roleplaying!

**Exploring the Options in Early Childhood Education: Programs and Roles**

We are about to take you on a tour of early childhood education (ECE) programs, where you will be introduced to the many career choices available to you as an early childhood professional. There is a wide range of roles and responsibilities undertaken by early childhood professionals and there are many variations in ECE programs. Our first story, similar to a travelogue, takes you on a trip through the community in which we live. We will introduce you to early childhood professionals and give you the opportunity to observe some of the varied programs for children here in our part of the country. We will also share our stories of programs around the country that we have visited, so that you will have a broad picture of the range of programs waiting for you.

**CASE STUDY: A Downtown Child Care Center**

The community of Portland, Oregon, is a medium-sized city with all the advantages and disadvantages of an urban area. With respect to the early childhood education profession, Portland represents a typical metropolitan setting for viewing professional roles and programs. We begin downtown, amidst the city’s office buildings and busiest traffic, where we find a very large child care center named Little Peoples. It is an example of a proprietary care center, meaning that it provides care and education for children and is designed to make a profit. Little Peoples fills an entire block at the street level. The floor-to-ceiling windows across the front and sides of the center allow the children to observe the downtown activity. On the outside, we see pedestrians observing the children. The center is bright with massive amounts of natural light (when it isn’t one of Portland’s famous rainy days) and the space is arranged with large play areas. Little Peoples opens at 7:00 a.m. to accommodate working parents and it closes at 6:00 p.m., when most workers are getting on the freeways to go home.
As we pass the center, two caregivers, Natasha and Jill, push the double doors open and emerge with six toddlers in strollers. The specially made strollers accommodate three children at once. A cool wind is blowing, so the children are wearing light sweaters and jackets. We hear the caregivers talking to the children: “Look at the big bus! There’s lots of people in the bus. Listen to the bus.” Soon, half the toddlers are pointing to the bus and communicating in their own way about the scene. Angela is shouting quite clearly, “Bus—beep beep, beep,” Jill responds, “Yes, the horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep.” She urges the children to wave back to the occupants on the bus who are now waving at the children.

At the intersection, the caregivers stop to discuss what direction to take for today’s walk. Natasha reminds Jill that they planned to walk past the produce market because pumpkins and apples are in season. She steps in front of the strollers and tells the children, “We’re going to see pumpkins and apples today. Can you make a pumpkin with your arms?” Angela and Dexter both lift their arms into a circle immediately, and others follow. Natasha also makes the pumpkin shape with her arms and begins singing a pumpkin song. She and Jill push the strollers for four blocks to the produce market.

We return to the center and watch the indoor activities. Preschool-aged children are involved in many different activities in one large room: Two children are painting at an easel, two others are sitting at a table with puzzles and Legos, several children are dressed up and playing in a dramatic play area, and a small group is cutting and pasting at a table with an adult who assists with the cutting and distribution of small mounds of paste. One child is wandering around and watching everyone else, and two boys are quietly wrestling on the rug. We look around the room and notice another adult who is comforting a child who appears to have a problem. In general, there’s a calm about this place—only a slight hum of activity.

Everything in this place feels so new and shiny, so orderly. It is obvious that the facility was carefully designed and built for the child care activities we observe here. Wondering how old it is, we stop in at the office and are told that the facility is six years old, and that it is part of a commercial chain of centers. We also learn that the caregivers have a wide range of qualifications. Natasha has a bachelor’s degree in child development, and several of the other caregivers have associate degrees in early childhood education from community colleges. Some have had experience at other centers. Others have no college credits, but many of the caregivers are attending the nearby university to earn credits in ECE.

**Professional Requirements**

Little Peoples is not unique in its staff qualifications. The National Child Care Staffing Study (Whitebrook, Phillips, & Howes, 1993) surveyed 227 child care centers in four major cities and found that only 12 percent of the respondents held bachelor’s degrees or graduate degrees in a field related to early childhood education, only 19 percent had some college education related to ECE, and 38 percent had no education at all related to the field. Since the study, there has not been much progress on a national level. Many states (30 to be exact) require no postsecondary coursework or degree for child care employment, and few states (4) require 3 to 12 credit hours in early childhood education coursework. Only one state requires a bachelor’s degree, and four require the Child Development Associate certificate (Barnett, 2003). Most requirements governing child care programs are inconsistent when it comes to staff qualifications, so there is huge variation in the training backgrounds of child care personnel (Whitebrook, 2003). You could probably stop reading now and find yourself a job as a child care provider. You would definitely start learning on the job, but you would have few options regarding your future in ECE and you might not always be able to serve children well. We sincerely hope that you will not stop reading and that you will make a commitment to learn as much as you can about children and their families. We urge you to become an early childhood professional. Come with us and look at some other programs for children so that you will be able to make choices and decisions.
CHAPTER 1

Programs like Papillon are not unusual in early childhood education because there is agreement between our philosophy about children and the concept of inclusion. Inclusion is the idea that all children should be served in the same setting with an environment and curriculum that is adapted to meet each child’s varied needs. It is also quite different from Little Peoples because Papillon is operated as a nonprofit center and sponsored by the Quebec Society for Handicapped Children. Papillon’s location in a large metropolitan city and its reputation for excellent child care attracts a diverse population of families, thus children of many ethnic backgrounds attend the center. There are two official languages spoken by the children and adults of Montreal: French and English. However, there are many other languages spoken informally at Papillon. It will be interesting to listen and observe for just a few minutes.

We enter Papillon through a wide hallway bordered on each side by larger-than-usual cubbies for children’s belongings. The floor is full of children struggling with boots and snowsuits. Several parents are helping their children and providing the usual encouragement (“Don’t forget to bring your mittens home”). We hear French, English, Spanish, and Japanese spoken.

We notice a smiling 3-year-old, Teresa, arriving in a wheelchair. She is greeted by several teachers and she looks at us with an inquiring expression. “Bonjour, comment ça va?” she asks. We respond with our best French, telling her that we are fine, and she smiles. Her friend Natalie begins to remove Teresa’s jacket, talking softly to her in French. When Natalie finishes, she places Teresa’s belongings in Teresa’s cubby and puts soft slipperlike shoes on her friend. Natalie wheels Teresa into the classroom and pushes her chair up to one of the amoeba-shaped tables. She then gathers paper and markers and seats herself at the table next to her friend. She places several colored markers and a paper on a raised stand in front of Teresa at the table. As we watch the two friends, we are touched by the opportunity that both of these children have for learning about differences. Later, we realize that this is the first of many advantages of inclusion, the integration of children with varying needs and abilities.

Back in the hall, we hear “Ooh la la” from adults in response to the children’s efforts and successes in removing their difficult, bulky, winter clothing. We also hear Gaby, one of the teachers, greet Robert, who is sitting on the floor fully clothed in his winter wear, and ask him, “Is anyone undressing you?” He shakes his head to indicate that no one is assisting. Gaby follows with, “OK, which leg is your prosthesis?” He points to his right leg and she carefully removes a boot from his right foot. She insists that he help by indicating where his clothes go. “Show me where your hook and your cubby are.” Once Robert is ready for the day, Gaby encourages him to use the side rail, and he scoots down the hall to his classroom. As we reflect on this brief episode, we are aware of Papillon’s goal of building self-confidence. Gaby provided Robert a chance to “be in charge,” even while helping him (Driscoll, 1995).

CASE STUDY: A Downtown Child Care Center for Children with Disabilities

This time, we are in the middle of Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and the downtown center is called Papillon (French for butterfly). It is an unusual child care center because Papillon is intentionally structured to serve an equal number of children with and without disabilities. It is also quite different from Little Peoples because Papillon is operated as a nonprofit center and sponsored by the Quebec Society for Handicapped Children. Papillon’s location in a large metropolitan city and its reputation for excellent child care attracts a diverse population of families, thus children of many ethnic backgrounds attend the center. There are two official languages spoken by the children and adults of Montreal: French and English. However, there are many other languages spoken informally at Papillon. It will be interesting to listen and observe for just a few minutes.

In an inclusive setting, children learn to appreciate differences.

We enter Papillon through a wide hallway bordered on each side by larger-than-usual cubbies for children’s belongings. The floor is full of children struggling with boots and snowsuits. Several parents are helping their children and providing the usual encouragement (“Don’t forget to bring your mittens home”). We hear French, English, Spanish, and Japanese spoken.

We notice a smiling 3-year-old, Teresa, arriving in a wheelchair. She is greeted by several teachers and she looks at us with an inquiring expression. “Bonjour, comment ça va?” she asks. We respond with our best French, telling her that we are fine, and she smiles. Her friend Natalie begins to remove Teresa’s jacket, talking softly to her in French. When Natalie finishes, she places Teresa’s belongings in Teresa’s cubby and puts soft slipperlike shoes on her friend. Natalie wheels Teresa into the classroom and pushes her chair up to one of the amoeba-shaped tables. As we watch the two friends, we are touched by the opportunity that both of these children have for learning about differences. Later, we realize that this is the first of many advantages of inclusion, the integration of children with varying needs and abilities.

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Programs like Papillon are not unusual in early childhood education because there is agreement between our philosophy about children and the concept of inclusion. Inclusion is the idea that all children should be served in the same setting with an environment and curriculum that is adapted to meet each child’s varied needs. We will be talking about inclusion in almost every chapter because many professionals believe that early childhood educators are best able to achieve inclusion and support all children with the benefits it brings (Bergen, 2003, p. 65).

Papillon is the kind of place where you could learn a great deal about how to be an early childhood educator. That is also true of our next stop in Portland, because we are going to visit a university laboratory preschool.
WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

Professional Requirements

The university context and the use of the Helen Gordon Child Development Center for demonstration purposes has an influence on the qualifications of the staff. All the head teachers have degrees in early childhood education and many of them are pursuing master's degrees. Their assistants have two-year associate’s degrees in early childhood education. The center pays well and attracts such qualified personnel. The program quality observed at the center is in direct relationship to the preparation of its staff and its reputation attracts long waiting lists of children. Most of the parents feel that their children are challenged and are developing well, both cognitively and socially. There is ample evidence that high-quality early childhood programs benefit children in terms of school success, social and emotional competence, and improved opportunities for health (Whitebrook, 2003; Fuller, Kagan, Loeb, & Chang, 2004).

The Tradition of Laboratory Schools

Laboratory schools began as nursery schools in the 1920s, with the same purpose as they currently have. The Helen Gordon Child Development Center is very much a part of university life, as are many laboratory schools on campuses of universities, colleges, and community colleges. Some are associated with schools of education, some with departments of child and family studies, and others with departments of psychology, child development, and related disciplines.

All of the local laboratory schools in Portland have a reputation for providing very high quality early childhood education programs. You probably have access to a laboratory school on the campus where you are studying. If you have not already visited the
program, make it a priority for your beginning professional development as you study with us. Laboratory schools are ideal places to observe and begin learning about the profession. University lab schools are also communities of learners, where “children and adults learn from each other in a democratic, reciprocal, and humanizing manner,” develop new questions, conduct new investigations, and gain new understandings and insights about learning and development (Stremmel, 2005, p. 378). In our city, they are one of many good examples of early childhood education programs. Now it is time to see another example. Let’s get ready to travel.

Portland is a city divided by a river. We now cross one of the city’s many bridges to see more examples of what is available for young children and their families. Close to the edge of a commercial area, in a section of the city marked by poverty, is an exceptional public school: Boise Eliot Elementary. It is one of Portland Public Schools’ Early Childhood Education Centers, with classes for preschool children through third grade. The school is in a very large—almost imposing—old brick building. When we enter, the hallways feel familiar, much like when we were young. However, once we enter the classroom area, there is a dynamic difference.

The hallway widens and is filled with equipment for woodworking, cooking, large motor activities, and so on. We learn that these areas are called the commons and that children in all of the adjoining classes use them. There is a distinctive smell of applesauce in this area. Children of different ages are in this common area engaged in varied activities. One teacher seems to be supervising them. She moves about, watching, commenting, or interacting with children, scanning their activities frequently. Adjoining this common area is a preschool classroom. Let’s go and observe.

**A Preschool Class**

Inside the preschool room, children are gathered around a teacher as she writes their ideas about making applesauce. They have just come back to the room from the commons, where they washed and peeled apples, cut them into tiny pieces (very tiny), then mashed and cooked them into sauce. No wonder it smelled so good! We hear, “We squashed the apples” and “I’m a good peeler.” Mac asks, “Is it cool yet, Miss Sabrina?” Two children go back to the commons area and get bowls of applesauce from the refrigerator. Soon, children are excitedly tasting their success.

Looking around the room, we notice that it is very similar to the one at the Helen Gordon Center. There are lots of centers: a block area, a dramatic play area, tables and shelves of art materials, a science corner, and a reading center. The room is cozy, with a little lamp and colorful pillows in the reading center. The dramatic play area offers many inviting accessories: a telephone, a typewriter, dishes and pots, dress-up clothes, child-sized furniture, and dolls. When the children finish eating, they scatter around the room and become quickly involved in play.

Several children call out, “Grandpa’s here,” when they see a grey-haired man come into the classroom. He is immediately coaxed and pulled into the reading center and children bring books for him to read.

While keeping one eye on the children with Grandpa in the reading center, we browse the walls of this preschool classroom. We believe that a person can learn a lot about a program by studying the walls. Lots of examples of children’s art, many of which look like they were hung by the children, decorate the walls. Sheets of photographs of the children engaged in activities are mounted with captions that sound like they were dictated by the children. We recall now that Miss Sabrina took some pictures of the children eating their applesauce. Now we know why. This is a room where we could spend a lot of time, but we must move on.

**A Kindergarten Class**

The next classroom is a kindergarten with one teacher and a teacher’s aide. We also see a parent reading a book to a small group of children on an old sofa. Several children are drawing and writing in journals, some are “writing” with computers, and others are listening to story tapes. The teacher’s aide, Jeremy, is sitting on the floor with five children looking closely at a basket of squash. They take turns touching the squash and describing its textures as Jeremy records their vocabulary on a large sheet of paper: bumpy, ridges, rough, like little hills.

The children’s writing is hung in places all around the room. We see that some of it has been dictated to the adults and some of it is invented spelling.
The kindergartners are encouraged to spell words as they sound, so the children invent their own spellings. It is evident that much of their work has been produced using computers. Many displays are around the room: on window sills, small tables, shelves, and hanging from the ceiling in mobile form. Those displays tell us that the children engage in projects, or in the project approach, in this classroom. Projects are focused studies of topics in which all of children’s learning is integrated into the study. For example, there is evidence of a project about windows, with children’s paintings of stained glass windows, photos of windows around the neighborhood and around the world, measurements of windows, and window-washing equipment in the display area.

Once again, the environment in this kindergarten tells us much about the activities of this class. As we prepare to leave, we see the children go into small groups (of three or four) and begin to have Show and Tell time. Some of the children have bags or boxes of items they have brought from home to show, while others tell about an event at home or an adventure in the neighborhood. Adults are in some of the groups but not in all. The children appear quite capable of conducting their own group activity, and we notice that they listen intently to each other. We would love to stop and listen to those conversations, but there is one more classroom to visit before leaving Boise Elliot School.

A Blended Class

The next classroom is a blended class of first-grade and second-grade children. Their teacher is Robin, whom you met at the beginning of this chapter. About half of the 23 children are sitting with Robin, talking about today’s edition of the Oregonian, the local newspaper. They are especially interested in a story about children at another school. The children clamor to see the photos of the other children planting tiny trees. “Read what it says, please,” asks Micah. Robin shows them the headline and asks if anyone can read it. Several children shout out the words trees and children and school. Robin assists them with the words learn and neighborhood, then asks the group to predict what the story is about. She guides them to see that the headline and the photos help them begin reading the story. Then she reads the news story to the group. During this time, the other children are at centers for painting, construction, card making, block building, and technology.

Thuy, one of the children in Robin’s class, is sitting with her mother. Thuy and her family are recent refugees from Vietnam. After the newspaper discussion, Robin comes to Thuy and her mother and guides them around the room. She shows them examples of children’s work or activity in each of her many centers, and Thuy’s mom nods her head, acknowledging her understanding of what Robin is showing her. When they stop at the easels, Thuy shows interest, so her mother puts a painting apron on Thuy and encourages her to paint, speaking to her in Vietnamese. Thuy seems a little hesitant but proceeds to paint. Soon, one of the other children is chatting with her and encouraging her painting.

It looks like Thuy’s mother is preparing to leave, and we see Robin packing a canvas bag of books for her to take home. She has selected simple children’s books with little text, and adds some drawing paper and colored pens. They shake hands good-bye, and Robin goes immediately to Thuy’s side, puts her arm around her, and talks about her painting. Just listening to her is comforting, and we predict that Thuy and her family will make a smooth transition to her new school.

When topics are relevant to their lives, children are engaged and enthusiastic.

Curriculum

JOURNAL 1.2 Many teachers and caregivers are facing the situation we just described—that is, the entry of a child who speaks no English and who is probably making a transition from one culture to another. When you put yourself in Robin’s role, what would that be like for you? Have you ever been in a similar situation of trying to communicate with someone who couldn’t understand you? What did you do and how did you feel?
CHAPTER 1

Professional Requirements

All the teachers at Boise-Eliot school have elementary teaching certificates, some with early childhood endorsements. Many of the teachers, like Robin, have master’s degrees and years of experience. The teacher’s aides have degrees in related programs—psychology, child and family studies, social work, and so on. Public school requirements for full-time teachers of young children are different depending on where you live. States vary tremendously in terms of certification requirements and the kind of preparation required for teaching young children. Some states require special certification and others require only an elementary teaching certificate.

Another kind of early childhood education program with varied requirements for its personnel is Head Start. Head Start programs are federally funded comprehensive programs that began in the 1960s during the War on Poverty. They were designed to counter the negative effects of poverty on young children and their families, and to offer high-quality early childhood education experiences for the children. Early in Head Start’s history, it was realized that if parents weren’t involved, the program would not be very successful. Head Start, then, is well known for its serious commitment to parent and family involvement. Our next stop is a Head Start center.

CASE STUDY: A Head Start Program

About 10 blocks from Boise-Eliot school is a rambling, dark brown house with multiple extensions—the site of a Head Start program. As we enter, we are once again greeted by the sounds of children. One group of 4- and 5-year-old children is approaching us and singing “This Old Man” as they climb the stairs. They gather just outside the building, sit on the grass, and listen as their teacher reminds them, “We’re going to walk around our neighborhood today. What are we looking for?” Several children say, “Houses.” Their teacher, Jonah, probes, “What do we want to notice about the houses?” Kim raises her hand and contributes, “We are looking for brick houses, wood houses, stone houses, and . . .” Joseph shouts, “And plastic houses.” Jonah agrees and asks for volunteers to be recorders. Many children volunteer, so four recorders are easily available. Jonah gives each recorder a sheet with a picture of a different kind of house. He reminds the children that the recorders will make a mark every time the group sees a certain kind of house. “Then we will count the marks to see what is the favorite kind of house in our neighborhood. Which kind do you think will be the favorite?” he asks. After the predictions, Jonah nods to his teaching assistant, Melissa, indicating he is ready to leave. She gathers half of the group to walk with her, and the rest of the children leave with Jonah.

Back inside the Head Start center, we see a group of parents in a lounge area talking about their children and about the center. As members of the parents’ advisory group, these individuals are responsible for policy decisions and recommendations to the center. Today, they are planning a transition program for children and families who will be moving on to kindergarten programs. We hear, “My older son had a terrible time when he left Head Start. I don’t want that to happen to Tyrone.” Another parent responds, “I think that we should spend some time visiting those kindergartens before we can decide what the children will need.” Lots of head nodding and verbal agreement follow the suggestion.

Professional Requirements

Most Head Start programs are not associated with public schools and have different requirements for teaching positions. In fact, many of the program’s paid staff begin their Head Start employment without baccalaureate degrees in early childhood education. Many Head Start teachers have or are working toward the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (described in Chapter 13). Head Start has raised its standards by requiring that every classroom has an associate’s degree (AA/AS) teacher and that 50 percent of its teachers must hold a bachelor’s degree (BA/BS) by 2008. Orientation, in-service,
and other forms of on-the-job training and learning are a critical part of the structure of Head Start programs. Chapter 9 describes current qualifications for staff.

This is a good time to look at the different staff positions for professional roles in early childhood education and the educational qualifications desired for quality programs for children. Figure 1.1 displays a sample of some of the major roles in early childhood education. It would be ideal if we could tell you that you need specific qualifications for specific roles, but there is great flexibility in the profession at this time. Head Start has a number of the specialty roles described at the bottom of Figure 1.1 and the qualifications for those roles may depend on the community of children and families, the availability of qualified professionals, and the program emphasis.

One of the major characteristics of Head Start programs is their integration of services for families. Many kinds of services (medical, dental, counseling, and housing assistance) are blended into the educational program and located all in one center to support families better. Let’s visit another Head Start program. This one, in Alachua County, Florida, epitomizes service integration.

**CASE STUDY: A Comprehensive Program for Families**

The Family Services Center of Alachua County, Florida, is conceptualized as a “one-stop-shop” of family services. Through its on-site services and connections with other nearby facilities, over 750 preschool children and their families are served. It began in a complex of portable buildings with stairs and walkways connecting the units. In each of the buildings is a different kind of service for families.

### Sample Differentiated Staffing Structure for Educational Personnel with Suggested Educational Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Role</th>
<th>Relevant Master’s</th>
<th>Relevant Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Relevant Associate’s</th>
<th>CDA Credential</th>
<th>Some Training</th>
<th>No Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td></td>
<td>Degree and 3 years’ experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>Degree and 3 years’ experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Teacher</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This figure does not include specialty roles such as educational coordinator, social services director, or other providers of special services. Individuals fulfilling these roles should possess the knowledge and qualifications required to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

CHAPTER 1

The center has a Head Start program and its resources and services are shared with subsidized child care centers in the surrounding neighborhood housing projects. The nearby elementary school also has Head Start classrooms. Head Start is part of a huge collaboration between state-funded pre-kindergarten programs, early intervention classes, private child care and preschools, and public kindergartens and primary grades. Children benefit from the arrangement because there are more resources, easier transitions between programs, and high-quality programs due to combined expertise and consultation.

Back at the center there is also a health clinic with a nurse practitioner and a doctor. Their services include physicals, immunizations, well child care, family planning, and general medical care. In another building are adult education classes for family members. Many of the adults are working toward their general equivalency diplomas (GEDs) by fulfilling requirements and preparing to take exams. There are also technology classes and seminars in various topics such as nutrition, family finances, and music appreciation.

We listen to the conversations between Dr. Shelton Davis and a group of parents sitting in a semi-circle around him. We hear a parent share, “Eddie is 6 years old now and he’s very complicated. He was two weeks overdue and when he was born, he looked old. He was so wrinkled, he just looked old. He was a baby that was always moving, like he does now. Sometimes it was like he was shaky, and he got frustrated easily. If I woke him up to feed him, he acted frustrated. If I stopped what he was doing to change him, he acted frustrated. Mostly, I just remember him as so active.”

At this point, Eddie’s mom and Dr. Davis talk about hyperactivity and its connection to nutrition and the need for fresh fruits and vegetables. Dr. Davis reminds the group, “You remember when you roleplayed hyperactivity and we had our bodies wiggling and moving?” Lots of heads nod, and another parent says, “I remember that it was impossible to notice or hear anything else but my own movement.” The discussion continues and gets quite lively. It’s obvious that there is mutual trust and caring among this group (Driscoll, 1995, p. 199).

JOURNAL 1.3

Think for a minute what it might be like to be very poor, to be a single parent with two young children, without transportation, and feeling isolated. What would be your major concerns? If representatives of a program like Head Start approached you, what would you want them to provide?

Head Start and other comprehensive programs around the country are quite different in the way they serve children and families, with different philosophies, staffing, approaches, and services. Much depends on the community. Whether it is a tiny rural town or a crowded major city, you will consistently find that Head Start programs reflect the community of families in which they are located. When you meet Felipe and his family, you will visit his Head Start preschool and meet many of the professionals who make the program a success. For now, it’s time to meet another professional and visit another setting.

CASE STUDY: A Family Child Care Facility

It’s time to experience family child care, often called day home, so we leave the city and drive to one of the many suburban communities encircling the downtown area of Portland. In these sprawling neighborhoods, there are many family day homes for children. This alternative child care arrangement is another option for families. We park in the driveway of a family day home and it looks just like the other homes in this neighborhood. Once inside the front door, it is obvious that this home is different from most others in the neighborhood. Rather than the usual home furnishings, there is an abundance of toys and materials for children. There is even an easel set up in the kitchen. Two children are sitting at the kitchen table, coloring on large sheets of paper, and a child of 10 months is sitting in a highchair next to the table. One of the children, Xavier, tells us, “These are our placemats for lunch” as he colors his sheet. The family child care provider, Harriet, is also at the table, cutting apples on a wooden board. The wonderful smell of fresh bread baking fills the house. Harriet converses with the children and places small slices of apple on
What is early childhood education?

Professional Requirements

As family child care gains recognition and regulation, the qualifications required for this child care arrangement are demanding attention. The latest data on family child care estimate that 28 percent of all caregivers are family child care providers, and that at least 12 states require preservice training and 36 states require annual ongoing training hours. However, not even half of the family child care workforce has a bachelor’s degree or some college, and about half have a high school diploma or less (Le Moine, 2006). Staff qualifications will vary greatly, depending on whether the home is regulated, licensed, or associated with a state or local agency. Licensing standards often specify staff qualifications, and training for family child care staff is offered by a variety of agencies and professional associations. It is difficult for family child care providers to take time off to attend workshops and other training sessions because they cannot leave parents without the needed care. Some providers seek weekend and evening training opportunities.

Professionalization of Family Child Care

Not so long ago, family child care was unregulated and invisible (Whitehead, 1994). Those who provided care in their homes were usually referred to as babysitters and viewed simply as custodial caregivers. Today, family care has become increasingly visible due to regulations, support from child care resources and referrals, and the connections of parents to family child care. Families have come to appreciate the benefits of family child care: proximity of care in one’s neighborhood, small groups of children, a home environment, and a familylike structure. A study (1999) by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of early child care found that some of the “highest level of positive caregiving was provided by in-home caregivers, which included family members caring for one child, followed by home-based arrangements with relatively few children per adult” (p. 2). The results describing family child care look better for younger children, under 3 years of age, than for the preschool child who needs the socialization of group care. Experienced family child care providers are more likely to respond positively to toddlers’ social bids and less likely to restrict toddlers than center caregivers (Kontos & Wilcox-Herzog, 2001, p. 90).

In addition, family home care providers have a very committed professional organization, the National Association for Family Child Care, with extensive offerings of workshops and classes in child development, developmentally appropriate practice, guidance and
discipline, health and safety issues, and so on. For many families, family home care plays an important role in essential child care and early learning. In addition to the home care providers’ professional organization, many states are developing resource networks to support these caregivers, thus reducing the isolation, lack of visibility, and low levels of empowerment typically reported by those who provide home care (Lanigan, Peterson, & Jewett, 2006).

As you continue your ECE studies, we predict that you will see family home child care providers begin to take a leadership role in the profession.

**CASE STUDY: A Parent Cooperative Preschool**

Our destination is a large church with an adjoining building that houses a parent cooperative preschool, or nursery school, a program in which the parents fulfill many of the planning and teaching responsibilities and the administration of the program. The two classrooms are filled with colorful and attractive play materials, many of which appear to be homemade rather than commercially produced. The place has a comfortable feeling and there is a quiet hum of children at work. Two fathers and three mothers are working with the children at this time. On one large table there are several large tubs of home-made play-dough and lots of kitchen and cooking utensils for molding and shaping the dough. The two adults and seven children sitting around the large table are very occupied with their play-dough creations, and the conversation is completely focused on their work. “Try rolling it,” someone advises. “Look what I made,” a child announces. Many play-dough snakes and cookies adorn the table.

Across the room, one of the mothers is reading to a small group of children. Another mom is guiding four children hard at work in the exploration center, filled with a variety of scales, rulers and measuring tapes, and very compelling objects to weigh and measure. One of the dads, Mr. Margolin, is sitting at the snack table, encouraging Alex as he spreads cream cheese on his bagel. He asks Alex if he knows what cream cheese is made of, and Alex shakes his head no. Mr. Margolin asks Alex if he likes other kinds of cheeses, and soon they are discussing swiss and cheddar, referring to “that white cheese with all the holes,” and “the bright orange one we have on our tacos.” It becomes obvious to us that the two are very comfortable together, and that Mr. Margolin spends a lot of time at the preschool.

**Professional Requirements**

There are no professional requirements for the parents working at this center, but cooperative programs generally schedule workshops and classes for the parents. The teacher requirements vary from one program to another and are often determined by the parents. Parent cooperatives reflect the neighborhood in which they are situated. The socioeconomic status of families influences the budgetary aspects of the program and, consequently, the salary and staff requirements. It’s time now to drive to the outer limits of Portland to visit yet another type of child care center.

**CASE STUDY: An Employer-Sponsored Child Care Center**

We arrive at an area of business and industrial complexes—mostly newly constructed office buildings, manicured lawns and shrubbery, and huge parking lots. One complex is that of Mentor Graphics Corporation. The corporation has invested in quality child care for the children of those who work there. Such investments may be the way of the future.

We approach the Child Development Center building and are immediately impressed by the dynamic architecture, the festive quality of the building’s design, and the convenient location for parents. We note the walking paths from the center leading to various office buildings. They are well used. The entrance of the Child Development Center is not like most of the places we have visited so far. It is definitely part of a business—streamlined in furnishings and space. Just inside the door where we sign in is a large window. We hear the usual sounds of children’s play but the sounds are muffled. The volume increases as we approach the classrooms and peek in the large circular windows that allow those in the hallway to watch the classroom events.
Other Forms of Employer-Sponsored Support

Although employer-sponsored child care has been a hot topic in the corporate world and the early childhood education profession, it continues to be the least frequently provided employee benefit. Employers continue to raise the cost issue of sponsored child care; however, studies show that the benefits outweigh the costs with reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and lower employee turnover (Blassingame, 2004). Besides setting up an on-site center, employers can provide support for families and their child care needs in varied forms:

- Financial supplements or subsidies may be granted to help employees pay the cost of child care.
- Employers may issue vouchers to employees, who use them to purchase child care services.
Contributions may be made to local child care centers that provide care for large numbers of employees' children. The contributions reduce the rates for families, so they are a kind of subsidy.

Employers purchase child care services at nearby centers and make such services available to employees free or at reduced rates.

Services that include information and counseling for families in need of child care may be provided.

All these forms of support ultimately make child care arrangements easier and more accessible for families. Other ways that employers can help is to provide flexible schedules, maternity and paternity leaves, and parent education programs. Many businesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>GROUP SIZE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Infants**

Birth to 15 months\(^b\) | 1:3 | 1:4 |

**Toddlers/Twos (12 to 36 months)\(^b\)**

12 to 28 months | 1:3 | 1:4 | 1:4 | 1:4 |

21 to 36 months | 1:4 | 1:5 | 1:6 |

**Preschool\(^b\)**

2.5-year-olds to 3-year-olds (30–48 months) | 1:6 | 1:7 | 1:8 | 1:9 |

4-year-olds | 1:8 | 1:9 | 1:10 |

5-year-olds | 1:8 | 1:9 | 1:10 |

**Kindergarten** | 1:10 | 1:11 | 1:12 |

Notes: In a mixed-age preschool class of 2.5-year-olds to 5-year-olds, no more than two children between the ages of 30 months and 36 months may be enrolled. The ratios within group size for the predominant age group apply. If infants or toddlers are in a mixed-age group, the ratio for the youngest child applies.

Ratios are to be lowered when one or more children in the group need additional adult assistance to fully participate in the program (a) because of ability, language fluency, developmental age or stage, or other factors or (b) to meet other requirements of NAEYC Accreditation.

A group or classroom refers to the number of children who are assigned for most of the day to a teacher or a team of teaching staff and who occupy an individual classroom or well-defined space that prevents intermingling of children from different groups within a larger room or area.

Group sizes as stated are ceilings, regardless of the number of staff.

Ratios and group sizes are always assessed during on-site visits for NAEYC Accreditation. They are not a required criterion. However, experience suggests that programs that exceed the recommended number of children for each teaching staff member and total group sizes will find it more difficult to meet each standard and achieve NAEYC Accreditations. The more these numbers are exceeded, the more difficult it will be to meet each standard.

\(^a\)Includes teachers, assistant teachers–teacher aides

\(^b\)These age ranges purposefully overlap. Programs may identify the age group to be used for on-site assessment purposes for groups of children whose ages are included in multiple age groups.

\(^c\)Group sizes of 10 for this age group would require an additional adult.

and corporations have learned that their employees will be more satisfied and productive in their work if their children are well cared for.

**Other Early Childhood Education Programs and Options for Families**

We will return to the Mentor Graphics center when we study infants later in this book, so you will get to know Luke and the center very well. In the meantime, we need to move on before we run out of time for our travels. For efficiency reasons, we will simply describe some of the child care and preschool alternatives that you will find in the middle-class suburban neighborhoods in which we are traveling. In a number of the homes nearby, *nannies* live with families to take care of children. Nannies, which represent about 5 percent of the child care options, are usually trained in short-term programs for their work. Some nannies, referred to as *au pairs*, come from Europe and usually stay for a year. This particular child care alternative is especially appropriate for parents who work flexible schedules or extensive hours. Often, nannies help with transportation to school and to activities such as scouts and lessons, and with a few household chores.

**CHURCH-BASED PROGRAMS.** The other options you will find in these neighborhoods are preschool programs: a school with a Montessori curriculum and a church-related school. We will describe Montessori ideas in detail in Chapter 4, so our discussion here will focus only on church-based or church-related preschools. Some claim that churches are the largest single provider of child care in the United States (Neugebauer, 1991a). They generally offer toddler groups, full- and part-time preschool classes, and full-day child care programs. In many of these programs, religious or spiritual development is subtly integrated into a traditional ECE curriculum. Staffing structures vary in church-related schools and the criteria for hiring is often influenced by program goals. A tremendous variation exists in this category of programs, but there is a common quality of providing a warm and loving environment for children.

**INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS.** A unique approach to child care is through intergenerational or cross-generational programs, which combine child and elder care at shared sites. Although still relatively new, cross-generational programs have been cited as a cost-saving opportunity for those offering separate programs. “About 1,000 intergenerational facilities exist nationwide, and their social and financial benefits continue to spur their expansion” (Blassingame, 2004, p. 1). Corporate sponsors have become interested because of the growing number of employees who care for both adults and children simultaneously. Shel Silverstein, in his *A Light in the Attic* (1981), inspires us to consider the opportunities for both children and older adults to learn from each other and to socialize in meaningful relationships.

Intergenerational programming requires complex planning, broad understandings of the physical and emotional development of both children and elders, as well as sensitivity to the capabilities, needs, and diversity of both groups. Such programs offer a challenge to the ECE professional, with the potential for significant transformative experiences and contributions to our society.

**AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS.** Finally, in the broad category of child care are after-school programs or school-age child care for children whose parents’ work schedules and school hours do not match. Such programs are also called extended day or expanded learning programs. Unfortunately, the need for such care arrangements is barely being addressed by actual programs despite widespread interest and involvement of public schools, communities, states, and federal funding (Selhson, 2001). It is clear that school-age child care needs consistent, professionally trained staff. The National School-Age Care Alliance, now called the National After School Association, has more than 9,000
members and 36 state affiliations. The association has implemented an accreditation process with the benefits of “program improvement, better outcomes for children and youth (ages 5 to 14), positive interactions between children, youth and adults, and ensuring a safe and challenging environment for children and youth when out of school” (National After School Association, 2006, p. 1). Quality of staff has been significantly influenced by the accreditation process, so there is real progress in addressing that concern.

**UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL OR PREKINDERGARTENS.** Another kind of program that has significantly increased in terms of number of children served in the last few years is a set of publicly funded programs for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children called *universal preschool or prekindergartens.* In 2003, publicly funded preschool or prekindergarten programs existed in 38 states and the District of Columbia and served 740,000 children in those schools (Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media, 2006) at a cost of $2.5 billion in state funds. Depending on what part of the country you live in, the universal preschool programs offer varied curriculum emphases, a mixed delivery model (settings from Head Start to private schools), and differences in class size, teacher salaries, and professional qualifications. One of the controversies surrounding this use of public funding is the quality of universalism—that is, the availability to all children. Those in opposition to the program question the use of scarce resources for children whose families are able to pay for preschool or who provide “out of school experiences that are equivalent to those provided in formal settings” (p. 3). It is an issue that you will need to consider as you explore the variety of early childhood care and education programs available to families. Much like the universal prekindergartens or preschools, the program we will visit next is a fairly recent one that also responds to a societal need.

**CASE STUDY: A Community-Based Program for Homeless Children and Families.**

We return now to the downtown area because we want to show you one more program for children and families. This fairly new kind of program reflects some of the societal issues we posed at the beginning of this chapter. In downtown Portland, the YWCA offers a school for homeless children. These children often move from shelter to shelter, changing schools with every move. Having a school right in the shelter encourages a family to stay in one place and provides some stability for children. This school has been supported by extensive volunteer efforts and resources shared by other agencies. University students also assist here to help stretch the minimal budget available for this program. The shelter location supports an integration of services for the whole family—that is, some health services, parent education, assistance with housing, and school for the children. In Portland and in other cities, these schools have been successful in providing full and equal educational opportunities for homeless children.

As we look into the large living room, we see children snuggled on the couch with a young woman who is reading a story and asking questions about the characters. Three children are sitting on the floor around a coffee table with a dad. They have plastic poker chips and are using them to figure out math problems. A mom and her son are working with another adult on a project to weigh and measure the children in the group. Billy is recording the weight and height of each child. In a little side room, children are sorting clothes into piles for summer and winter. There is conversation about the color of the garments, the buttons, whether certain items will keep someone warm or not, and the children’s likes and dislikes.

It is currently estimated that approximately 930,000 homeless students will need services such as those provided by the YWCA, with special liaisons for preschool children in programs like Head Start (Jacobson, 2002). We will discuss more issues of homelessness when we describe families and communities in Chapter 6.

**PROGRAMS FOR TEEN PARENTS.** Another kind of program in which we would observe early childhood educators is a program for teen parents, often in conjunction with a child care program. A recent study found that teen parents improve their school performance and are very responsible about their children’s health care when high
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Schools offer child care (Sadler, Swartz, & Ryan-Kruse, 2003). The researchers also reported higher graduation rates, less absenteeism, and no repeat births for the parents. The study stipulated that the child care was provided in a high-quality, developmentally appropriate center. Such programs typically show positive gains for both the children and their parents, usually mothers. You will be prepared to work with infants and preschool children, but you will not have preparation for work with teenagers. If this interests you, you will need to explore the training needed to understand adolescent development and the psychological needs of teen parents (DeJong, 2003).

Summary of Professional Roles and Programs

Professional Roles. As we visited Portland’s early childhood education programs, you encountered a variety of professional roles. We advocate calling all who work with young children and their families early childhood professionals. The term reflects a concerted effort to recognize the status of those who work with young children. Although there are still some who regard these individuals as mere babysitters, there is an increasing recognition that these individuals deserve the respect, the rewards, and the responsibilities that accompany professional status. As you prepare for the profession and as you begin your career, you will encounter both kinds of thinking. It is important for you to be able to represent the profession by being able to describe why it is a profession. Keep that in mind as you read the stories to come and as you respond to the journal questions.

From the broad term early childhood professional, we move to the varied roles associated with the kind of programs in which individuals work and with the kind of preparation individuals have. You may see yourself becoming an early childhood teacher, a preschool or nursery school teacher, or a kindergarten or a primary grade teacher. If you intend to pursue one of those roles, you will need specialized preparation for your work and possibly a certification of your competencies. You will have responsibility for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate program for children. Perhaps you will begin by working with a teacher as an assistant or associate teacher. Again, you will need some specialized training, but you will be in a supportive role of helping teachers. Maybe you will begin as a teacher’s aide in classrooms, helping teachers and assistant teachers. You will not be required to have as much preparation, but you will be able to use your position to learn more about early childhood education. Another category of early childhood professionals are caregivers and their aides. These individuals have a variety of preparation, depending on the kind of program in which they work and the criteria for hiring. They have responsibility for basic care, protection, education, and guidance of young children; support for their families; and, in most cases, planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate program for children. In administrative roles in early childhood education, we find directors of child care and preschool programs, as well as principals of schools in which there are kindergartens and primary grades.

Although the work of early childhood professionals varies significantly, many feel that there are some common roles shared by all (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 1993). “They all provide instruction to children, nurture and comfort children, offer medical assistance, keep records, work with parents, and cooperate with support staff” (p. 27) in the settings in which they work. Most of us would also agree that all early childhood professionals contribute to the general growth and development of children, and especially to their socialization and moral development.

JOURNAL 1.4 Think of all the professional roles you observed. What kind of early childhood educators do you know in your community? At this time, what role(s) appeals to you?

Range of Programs. As you observed in our travels through the city, our profession, that of early childhood education, encompasses an enormous range of program options. It has been estimated that every day, 13 million preschoolers—including
6 million infants and toddlers—are in child care (Children’s Defense Fund, 2003). It is not surprising that there is so much diversity in child care and preschool programs. That diversity has implications for you as you prepare to work with young children. You have many choices in your chosen career. Will you select a public or private facility? What size program interests you? Private home? Small group center? Large school? What about the length of your workday? Your choices range from full day to half day, every day to some days, and combinations thereof.

In addition to the range of programs we just visited or described for you, there are a few others that you may consider when choosing your professional role. It will be good to explore as many choices as possible while you are studying ECE. In the chapters ahead, we take you on visits to observe and experience some of the most prominent kinds of programs. In addition, please try to locate some of the programs listed here:

**Early Childhood Programs**
- Transition classes (preschool to kindergarten or kindergarten to first grade)
- Toy lending libraries
- Infant stimulation programs
- Private schools
- Departments of Children, Youth, and Families
- Health and Human Services
- Child and Family Resource Programs

The core of your preparation will be consistent, no matter what kind of program you choose to pursue for employment. Some additional skills or knowledge may be required, depending on your choice. That is our next and possibly our most important question. What do early childhood professionals need to know and be able to do? It is important to answer that question in this first chapter to give you some direction and to frame the remaining chapters. It is also important that we make certain to guide and support your development toward that knowledge and those skills. You must direct your efforts so that you are ready to fulfill the early childhood educator role.

**What Do Early Childhood Educators Need to Know and Be Able to Do?**

To answer the question of what you need to know and be able to do, we looked at two categories of information: competencies and characteristics. The competencies are simpler to address. They are straightforward lists of what you must know and be able to do. The characteristics are more complex because they begin to describe who you must be. They are not direct—we will have to interpret them together. That is where your individuality will come in. We can only guide—it is you who will be making the decisions.

**Qualities and Characteristics of an Early Childhood Educator**

A wealth of qualities and characteristics exist among early childhood educators. The diversity reflects the wide range of opinions represented within the profession. We begin with some qualities that have characterized some impressive and professional teachers we have met in our combined 50 years of experience. Those teachers all viewed themselves as learners and were always willing to question their practices and to make changes. These qualities go hand in hand with flexibility, risk taking, and passion. We care about how you see yourself as a learner and we will put our energy into nurturing you in your learner role. We hope to motivate your willingness to learn and grow by the kind of conversations we have in this book.
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At all levels of education, it is very important to be a decision maker. We expect that the knowledge you gain from this book and from your coursework will be a foundation for the decisions you will make about children, their families, and your program. A few years ago, a set of primary-grade teachers were studied about their beliefs and practices (White, Buchanan, Hinson, & Burts, 2001). The researchers found that the majority of teachers expressed a strong sense of self. “They believed themselves to be competent, capable, and professional, and their autonomous characteristics enabled them to focus on the needs of children above all else” (p. 32). You may not be feeling competent or capable at this moment, but as you gather experiences and insights, you will begin to think of yourself with those characteristics.

Qualities of good teachers include inner security, intuition, and detachment (Cartwright, 1999). Perhaps you are surprised by the last descriptor—detachment—because it sounds like it’s in contrast to the love and caring you want to have for children. Cartwright explains that when an educator or caregiver has “inner security and a mature self-awareness [and] is at ease and fulfilled by her own adult development, she does not impose her personal needs onto her relationships with children” (p. 6). Your detachment can give children psychological space and help you make wise decisions based on knowledge of child development rather than on feelings prompted by the individual child. Ultimately, it means that you must have a knowledge base from which to draw. That takes us back to our question of what an early childhood educator needs to know.

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We hope that you have already begun to consider who you are in relation to the professional role of early childhood educator. We urge you to consider yourself, your personality, your previous experiences, and your strengths and limitations, especially in your interactions with others. Stop now and write about those qualities. Don’t worry about format or sentences—just write everything that comes to mind about who you are. Describe how you feel about yourself. Later, take some time to assess your thoughts with friends. Ask someone you trust to describe your personal qualities.

A Common Core of Knowledge and Skills

Back to answering the questions! To begin with competencies, we turn to the common core of knowledge and skills needed by all early childhood professionals. As we mention later in this chapter, the National Association for the Education of Young Children has established a “shared set of desired outcomes for all three levels of early childhood
preparation (Associate, Initial Licensure, and Advanced levels).” Those outcomes cluster around five standards:

1. Promoting child development and learning
2. Building family and community relationships
3. Observing, documenting, and assessing to support young children and families
4. Teaching and learning
5. Becoming a professional

A look at one or two of the outcomes will help you get an idea of what those mean. For standard 2, for example, building family and community relationships, the ECE professional will:

- Know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children’s families and communities.
- Use the understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families and to involve all families in their children’s development and learning.

**NEW PREPARATION STANDARDS.** In Chapter 11, we discuss the newest standards for early childhood professional preparation. There are common issues to those standards that effectively model themes that characterize excellent educational programs at all levels. There is a multidisciplinary emphasis in all five standards reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of the field of early childhood education. For you, it means that you will have to draw your professional preparation from and make your future professional decisions based on multiple disciplines. There is also an emphasis on outcomes and assessment of your achievement of them. Those outcomes respond to the question, What should tomorrow’s teachers know and be able to do? Along with those outcomes is the expectation that someone or some group of professionals will use “organized, fair, and effective assessment systems” to assess whether the outcomes have been achieved (Hyson, 2003, p. 7).

The competencies represented in the new standards require years of study and preparation, even though they may not appear that complex. Do you remember back in the beginning of this chapter when we were visiting the downtown child care center called Little Peoples? We described the frequent lack of qualifications for caregiver positions; that lack often accompanies other early childhood roles, as well. For a long time, we had no evidence that training and preparation—taking a course such as this one—could make any difference in the care and education of children. Fortunately, at this time, we have many studies and solid evidence that your preparation will make a difference. Take a look at the relationships in Figure 1.2 to understand what difference it will make if you take classes, go to workshops, read professional material, and participate in professional organizations.

By the year 2010, all states will require any early childhood educator who is responsible for children in centers and family child care to hold licenses. To attain a license, you will need to complete high levels of training and education and demonstrate competencies like those we’ve just discussed. You will also need to maintain your license by engaging in lifelong learning through workshops, conferences, readings, and so on.

**History of Early Childhood Education and the Profession**

One final collection of knowledge must be added to the list of what you must know as an early childhood professional, and that is the history of early childhood education and the profession itself. When you think about learning the history, you
may question how relevant it is to your future work with children. Gordon and Browne (2006) make a convincing case for studying the history of our profession of early childhood education by pointing out that knowing its history provides a kind of support for our work. Knowing where current practices and philosophy originated will help you appreciate and understand the changes to and the challenges of our profession.

Because we think that you can learn better when you experience new information in context, much of the history of our profession is found in chapters that describe related current practices. For example, the history of kindergarten is found in Chapter 10, which focuses on Keeley, a kindergarten learner, and the history of Head Start programs is found in Chapter 9, which looks at Felipe, who attends a Head Start preschool program. As you begin your professional preparation, it will be good to look with us at the past with a broad lens so that when you encounter famous theorists, such as Piaget or Montessori, or visit programs like Head Start, you will have some understanding of how the thinking and events of the past shaped what we know today.

**Ancient Civilizations of Greece and Rome**

In our studies of the educational systems of the ancient civilizations for formative ideas and theories, we see that childhood at the time was brief (up to age 7) and that children were treated as adults at an early age. Both Plato and Aristotle appeared to appreciate the importance of early education, valued the development of mind and body, and saw the importance of play. Plato encouraged adults to observe children’s play as a way of learning about children. In Rome, teachers were encouraged to use play to support children’s intellectual development.
European Influences

Much of the philosophy of the educational system in general and early childhood education specifically can be traced to Europe from the Middle Ages to today's influence of Reggio Emilia.

MEDIEVAL TIMES AND THE RENAISSANCE. During the Middle Ages, societal views of children were such that the period of childhood was even more abbreviated. Much past infancy, children were seen as “miniature adults” (Vinovskis, 1993, p. 126). Childhood was not seen as a separate phase of development; in fact, young children received very little attention at all. They were expected to grow up as quickly as possible. Children learned from their parents or later as apprentices. There were few educational systems and the church controlled much of what was learned and believed about children. With the Renaissance came a revival of interest in learning, a lessening of the influence of the church, and an increase in the attention given to the individual and arts. It was at this time that the first humanist educators advocated a basic education for all children, including girls and the poor (Gordon & Browne, 2006).

THE REFORMATION AND AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT. The work of Martin Luther led to religious reform and strengthened the movement for universal education. Luther believed that schools must educate the “whole child”—that is, develop the child intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and religiously. Luther’s reform influenced the development of the German school system, which would influence education throughout Europe and later in the United States.

A prominent and influential thinker of this time was John Amos Comenius, a bishop and educator. He gave us two critically important notions about children’s learning: (1) children’s development follows a natural order and education should follow that order and (2) children learn by doing, thereby affirming the value of play.

Comenius also produced some of the earliest educational materials for teachers and the first picture books for children. Through his books, he urged teachers to use sensory approaches in the learning process and to encourage children’s study of nature. After the Reformation, many schools were developed and most children, rich and poor, learned to read and write. The influence of the church continued to lessen and people thought in more humane ways. Education and knowledge were prized and new theorists appeared to influence the education of children. The first of these was John Locke, primarily a philosopher, who described children’s minds as “blank slates.” His well-known tabula rasa theory, which contradicted the former notion that children were born evil, supported the importance of experiences and of parents, society, and education. Locke introduced the idea of individual differences, the importance of learning through the senses, and the value of modeling by loving, respectful adults. Although his ideas were not supported or popular, one can certainly see his influence in today’s thinking about childhood.

A second important figure was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a French philosopher and theorist. He, too, contradicted the notion that children were born with sin. In his famous book Emile, Rousseau described the education of a hypothetical child to adulthood. He urged educators and parents to respond to the needs and interests of the child. He believed that young children learned differently from older children or adults and that they needed direct experience and exploration. Rousseau advocated, as educators do today, natural, unstructured play, with minimal adult interference, so that children could learn and develop naturally. Current theories about children’s active involvement in their own learning can be traced to Rousseau.

A third figure was the Swiss educator and theorist Johann Pestalozzi, who agreed with his colleagues about the right of all children to education. He believed that education should be adapted to each child’s abilities, interests, and stage of development. Many
of Pestalozzi’s ideas provided underpinnings of early childhood education. Today we encourage children to explore and discover with their senses, and support their individually paced learning. We value integrated curriculum and the development of relationships. Pestalozzi’s influence continues vividly in our profession (Feeney, Christensen, & Moravcik, 2000).

The fourth figure of the time was Friedrich Froebel, who is often referred to as the father of kindergarten. He envisioned schools as “children’s gardens,” hence the name kindergarten—places with play and toys for learning. Froebel, the originator of the idea that teachers needed preparation to guide children’s play, began the first training school. His novel toys were called “gifts” and they included yarn balls, blocks, natural objects, and various shapes. He also designed materials called “occupations” that were used for handiwork activities, such as bead stringing, cutting, and sewing. Froebel introduced songs, finger-plays, stories, and games as part of the learning experience. He clearly saw the education of young children as a very different process from the education of older children. Fortunately, some of the graduates of his training school brought Froebel’s ideas and his philosophy to the United States. You will learn more about the history of kindergarten in Chapter 10 when you meet Keeley and her kindergarten teacher.

Educational Developments in the United States

From Europe we move to the United States to look at the development of varied forms of early childhood education and the prominent ideas that shaped today’s programs for young children.

OUR EARLIEST APPROACHES. In colonial New England, much of early education was the responsibility of parents. Some families, however, did send their youngest children to private dame schools run by women in their homes. There, children learned the rudiments of reading. Sunday schools were also created to provide moral training and literacy.

In the early 1800s, infant schools, patterned after Great Britain’s infant schools, were established in the growing cities of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. The intent of these schools was to emphasize a close, affectionate relationship between children and teachers and to downplay intellectual pursuits. Initially, the schools were developed to prepare children from disadvantaged homes using Pestalozzian methods. There were frequent attempts to integrate the infant schools into the public system but those attempts met with great resistance. Eventually, there developed a split in thinking about what and how children should be taught in the infant schools. Some teachers and parents stressed play, whereas others tried to teach the alphabet and reading with rote memorization and strict classroom discipline. This same debate continues to plague early childhood education even today. The controversy resulted in the demise of infant schools in the United States.

THE PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION MOVEMENT. The ideas of Rousseau and Pestalozzi were most influential in the movement to improve society through reform of education. John Dewey is the best-known spokesperson for progressive education and actually the first to influence the U.S. educational system. Like Froebel, Rousseau, and Pestalozzi, Dewey saw the need to focus on the child. He wrote about education at a time when childhood was not valued and was rushed so that children could work. Dewey’s ideas are seen today in integrated curriculum, active learning, child-directed learning, the project approach, and group learning. He and other “modern theorists”—such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Montessori—influenced early childhood education as it is known today. You will read about those thinkers in Chapter 3,
Theories of Development, and in Chapter 5 as we describe varied curricular models. Two other movements have been influential in the history of early childhood education in the United States: the nursery school movement and the beginning of child care services.

**THE NURSERY SCHOOL MOVEMENT.** Nursery schools in the United States were influenced by the work of the McMillan sisters in England. They, too, responded to the needs of poor children, focusing not only on care and education but also health care to address children’s mental and physical development. The McMillans advocated active outdoor work and play and made great use of sandboxes, gardens, nature study, and other sensory experiences. Their nursery school ideas, together with Dewey’s progressive education ideals, directly influenced the way nursery schools developed in the United States. Caroline Pratt’s impressive City Country School in New York City opened in 1913 and is still a fine example of progressive early childhood education. You will visit City Country School in Chapter 5. Other prominent nursery schools include a laboratory nursery school directed by Harriet Johnson for the Bureau of Educational Experiments, the laboratory nursery school at Columbia University Teachers College directed by Patty Smith Hill, and the Ruggles Nursery School and Training Center in Roxbury, Massachusetts, directed by Abigail Eliot.

**CHILD CARE BEGINNINGS.** The earliest child care situations emerged as day nurseries in the nineteenth century primarily to serve immigrant children whose parents worked in urban factories. These day nurseries were not known for high-quality care with their untrained staff, high adult–child ratios, and very long hours. The care of children focused most often on minimal health requirements and safe environments. Much of the U.S. population did not support child care at that time because the prominent thinking was that children should be at home with their mothers. Later, during the Depression, another type of child care emerged, called emergency nursery schools. These schools were intended to provide child care relief to teachers, nurses, cooks, custodians, and others who needed employment (Feeney, Christensen, & Moravcik, 1996, p. 49). In the 1940s, the Lanham Act provided federally funded child care to support women working in defense plants. You will read about the Kaiser war nurseries in Box 1.1. At this same time, employer-sponsored child care also emerged in response to the needs of female workers. After World War II ended, most of the child care facilities either closed or were scaled down. Again, the belief was that children belonged at home with their mothers. Between that time and 1965, child care received little attention or support; however, by the 1970s, child care began to be a significant early childhood program responding to the growing needs of families. Throughout this book you will read about child care practices, visit an employer-sponsored child care center in Chapter 7, and learn about current public policies affecting child care in Chapter 13.

One final bit of history is the story of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Its history can become part of your professional identity and we urge you to consider becoming a student member as part of your beginning professional development.

**HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (NAEYC).** The NAEYC celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2001 and “affirmed that the original purpose—to create a movement to secure better educational environments and experiences for all young children”—had not been altered by the years (2001a). The organization began in 1926 in New York City with a preliminary meeting chaired by Patty Smith Hill (who directed Columbia’s nursery school and who wrote the song “Happy Birthday”). The meeting was attended by 25 members of the Committee on Nursery Schools. Two years later, 295 representatives from 24 states, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, and England attended, this time representing a wide range of professional roles associated with services to young children.
WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

By 1929, the loosely formed committee was inadequate. “People wanted to belong to a formal organization. As members of a variety of professions—nursery school people, pediatricians, home economists, social workers, nurses—they wanted an integrated association” (Hewes, 1996, p. 4). Their choices were to connect with the International Kindergarten Union (IKU), then being reorganized into the Association for Childhood Education (ACEI), or to form a new affiliation. The National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) was formed. It is said that the decision was influenced by the fact that the IKU was viewed as a group of female teachers, whereas the new nursery association included prominent men in its membership and was multidisciplinary (p. 5).

The best known of the war nurseries were the Kaiser Child Service Centers at the Kaiser Shipbuilding Company in Portland, Oregon (Hurwitz, 1998). To meet the changing needs of a growing number of women working in the shipyards, the company decided to build on-site child care centers. Kaiser’s two centers were built as state-of-the-art facilities and the cost of children’s care was shared by the company and the parents. In a remarkably short time, the centers were ready for children and staffed with very qualified directors and personnel who were college graduates from universities and colleges across the country. Those staff members were paid at a rate equivalent to any college graduate’s salary in the Kaiser Company. The centers also hired nurses, nutritionists, and family consultants to support 100 teachers and six group supervisors (p. 38). By 1944, approximately 1,000 children were cared for in each center.

Not only was the quality of care extremely high but also the cost of care was reasonable because of the Kaiser funding. The hours of care accommodated those parents who worked day shifts as well as those who worked night shifts. Every possible parent need was addressed, with infirmaries for sick children, immunizations, libraries, biweekly newsletters, a commissary for necessary care items, mending services, and a well-appreciated home food service (p. 39). Parents, mostly mothers, could order food from the centers when they brought children to the center and pick up the “precooked, prepackaged dinner when they picked up their children at the end of the day” (p. 39).

When you read about the Kaiser nurseries, you can’t help but be impressed by the standards of care they provided and by the sensitivity shown to working families. You also can’t help but wonder why such care and sensitivity is so rare today.

By 1929, the loosely formed committee was inadequate. “People wanted to belong to a formal organization. As members of a variety of professions—nursery school people, pediatricians, home economists, social workers, nurses—they wanted an integrated association” (Hewes, 1996, p. 4). Their choices were to connect with the International Kindergarten Union (IKU), then being reorganized into the Association for Childhood Education (ACEI), or to form a new affiliation. The National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) was formed. It is said that the decision was influenced by the fact that the IKU was viewed as a group of female teachers, whereas the new nursery association included prominent men in its membership and was multidisciplinary (p. 5).

The NANE organization thrived until the 1940s, when its energy was affected by the demise of the Works Project Administration (WPA) nurseries and the demands of the war. Conferences were held every other year and membership went below 100. A mimeographed bulletin was sent to members to try to maintain connections but financial handicaps plagued the organization. Twenty years later, with a growing membership and the reality that financial resources were essential to the life of the organization, members and officers aggressively sought membership dues as well as funds from foundations. By 1964, the organization made its debut as the National Association for the Education of Young Children with the first copies of its journal, Young Children, and a membership of over 1,300 members. The NAEYC today is a dynamic professional organization with over 100,000 members, a bustling set of office buildings in Washington, DC, and...
a staff to address public policy issues, educational and professional development work, accreditation of centers and programs, the publication of *Young Children* and at least six books per year, and many other extensive professional services. The annual conference attracts a lively crowd of over 10,000 participants, with a workshop on every topic related to early childhood education and miles of displays of products and publications related to the profession. Attending the conference will be the professional experience of your lifetime.

During NAEYC’s 75th anniversary year, members reflected on lessons learned over the years. Participants agreed that the “same truths emerge again and again and again” (NAEYC, 2001a, p. 51). Those truths and lessons serve as good reminders to all of us as we think about our profession:

1. Individuals make a difference.
2. United and organized, individuals make a greater difference.
3. Setting and promoting standards makes a major difference.
4. Providing opportunities for experts to exchange information about child development and education makes an important difference.
5. Disseminating knowledge about children and what early childhood education should provide—to caregivers, teachers, parents, professionals in related fields, public policymakers, media, and the general public—is crucial. (pp. 51–52)

Perhaps that wisdom will encourage you to join NAEYC as a student member so that you can begin making a difference.

Currently, NAEYC has begun an ambitious and valuable process of implementing new standards for early childhood professional preparation as well as comprehensive processes for accrediting early childhood programs (NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Performance Criteria). Both changes promote higher expectations for administrators, teachers, and assistant teachers in terms of qualifications, and are key to improving program quality (NAEYC, 2005). Information about both of those implementations will be threaded throughout this book because they both have significant influence on what will be expected of you when you complete your professional preparation and your future professional experiences.

**Professional Reflection**

Our final answer to the question of what early childhood educators need to know and be able to do concerns professional reflection. It is important that professionals be reflective about their work with children and about their professional development. This is the time to start professional reflection, so that by the time you embark on your career, it is a habit.

Our stories in the chapters that follow offer “shared situations from which to explore possible meanings of everyday issues across multiple perspectives” (Appl & Yorde, 2005, p. 311). Exploring those possible meanings will require you to reflect on them in a variety of ways. It will be important for you to relate those issues to your own lives, to compare the experiences of those in our stories with your own experiences and understandings, and to think deeply about the beliefs and assumptions of those who make decisions in the stories and about your own choices in those situations. Our stories offer “glimpses and forewarnings into the complex, unexpected and sometimes contradictory challenges” (p. 311) that you may experience as a teacher. We think that it is so much safer to experience some of those challenges in the context of your ECE program with your teachers and peers as support.

Before you go on to the next chapter, we have a final activity for you. It is an opportunity to reflect on your future as an early childhood professional by thinking about your past.
We wrote this chapter to show you the diversity of professional roles ahead of you and the range of professional settings in which you could choose to work with young children. It would be repetitive to summarize each type of program or to review the level of professional roles. Instead, we will emphasize the insights we want you to take into the next chapter and into your professional thinking. First, you have choices in early childhood education. That is part of the richness of the profession, as well as part of the complexity. Think of this feature as one of the main attractions to the profession and stay open to its diversity. Second, preparation and education are critical to the early childhood education profession and to your own professional development. You saw the differences that preparation and training can make. Be committed in your own thinking to lifelong learning and advocate for others to do the same. You can make a difference in the lives of children and in the profession. Finally, know yourself. As you observe children and adults, notice your reactions, your thinking, and your feelings. Maintain that reflective stance that you began in this chapter as you responded to the journal entries. Reflect on your life story, tell your stories to others, and begin building community.

In sum, you have many options ahead of you: varied professional roles, varied settings in which to work, varied models and mentors from which to learn, and varied ways to prepare for the profession. We look forward to this path we are taking together and we wish you well. Welcome to the community of early childhood professionals!
At the end of each chapter we will suggest opportunities for your professional development that are related to the content of the chapter. The reflection in which you engage in each chapter needs to be extended beyond our stories. We encourage you to get out and observe in your community.

As you reflect, observe, and practice, we recommend documenting your experiences in a professional portfolio. That portfolio will be useful for self-reflection and assessment as well as for representing yourself when you begin your career. It is a very good professional practice to begin now. Our final recommendation is to develop a professional library. No matter how well you learn to be an early childhood educator, you will continue to encounter situations or problems for which you need new ideas or solutions. You will want to have books and other resources to browse for information or to be refreshed. Remember Robin? We hope that you will follow her example and read and study constantly to keep improving your practice. One of the most important qualities of an early childhood professional is that of being a lifelong learner. Developing your own professional library is a good step in that direction.

Your Professional Portfolio

1. An assessment of your personal qualities and capacity to fulfill the role of an early childhood educator would be an excellent first entry for your professional portfolio.

2. We encourage you to set some goals for your professional development. At regular intervals, return to those goals to assess your progress or to set new direction.

Your Professional Library

Some suggestions for books and other resources for this beginning stage of your professional development include the following books and articles:


Your E-Resources

**Companion Website**

To access chapter objectives, practice tests, essay questions, and weblinks, visit the companion website at www.ablongman.com.authoredition.
“Teaching First Grade”

In this video, a first-grade teacher is interviewed about her experiences and her motivations for choosing to teach.

Go to Allyn & Bacon’s MyLabSchool (www.mylabschool.com). After logging in, enter Assignment ID ECV2 into the Assignment Finder and watch the video entitled “Teaching First Grade.”

- As you watch the video, think about the reasons that you are taking this Introduction to Early Childhood course and pursuing an early childhood education degree. What can you do to learn more about the profession and your career options?

MyLabSchool supports you in this course, your licensure exams, and your teaching career. You have access to video footage of real-life classroom scenarios, an extensive Case Study archive, Allyn & Bacon’s Lesson Plan & Portfolio Builder, Research Navigator (which includes EBSCO’s ContentSelect Academic Journal Database, New York Times Search by Subject Archive, and “Best of the Web” Link Library), and a Career Center with resources for PRAXIS exams and licensure preparation, professional portfolio development, job search, and interview techniques.
The Wonder of Children
Development and Dispositions
Chapter Focus

When you finish reading and reflecting on this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Describe major aspects of the development of an infant, a toddler, a preschooler, a child in kindergarten, and a child in the primary grades.
2. Draw implications from the development of each of the above children and plan a play activity or select a play material (toy) for each.
3. Define disposition and give a rationale for studying children’s dispositions.
4. Recommend developmentally appropriate practices for each age group of young children based on those children’s physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development.
5. Make an initial choice of an age group with which you would like to work and give a developmental rationale for your decision.

This chapter is about development and dispositions—two critical concepts for our study of children and the planning we do for their care and education. When we focus on the development of children, we learn what they are able to understand, do, feel, and be. With that understanding, we can set appropriate goals of knowledge, skills, and feelings and involve children in suitable activities. In addition to the learning goals that are typical for most early childhood education programs, we encourage you to include children’s dispositions when planning for their education. You have probably heard the word disposition used in a context of describing someone you know. “She’s got a sunny disposition” or “What a miserable disposition!” is commonly used. Based on those expressions, take a minute to think about what disposition might mean. In our conversations about children in this chapter, we will focus on both development and dispositions.

In NAEYC’s standards of “what tomorrow’s teachers should know and be able to do,” the first standard requires you to study development and dispositions. It will probably require much more information and experiences than this chapter can provide, but we offer a beginning, a foundation for meeting that standard. Standard 1, promoting child development and learning, asks you to use your understanding of young children’s characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children’s development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for all children. (Hyson, 2003, p. 29)

Introduction to Development and Dispositions

To begin to understand the concepts of development and dispositions, we are going to spend time observing a group of children. Unlike the groups we have observed thus far, this group is a mixed-aged group—that is, the children are not all the same chronological age. It is a class at the laboratory preschool we visited in Chapter 1, where we will see children from 3 to 6 years old. For a variety of reasons that include personality, social skills, play patterns, development, disposition, and age, these children work and play individually and together each day.
As you watch these children, keep in mind that you will see differences in their development and dispositions. Even if you have only a vague idea of what those concepts mean, we expect that you will begin to understand them by observing the differences in children. Remember: Children have a lot to teach us, if only we will pay attention.

CASE STUDY: Studying Children to Learn about Development and Dispositions

It is 8:12 A.M. and a sleepy-looking Adam, age 4, arrives at preschool, with his dad encouraging him to “have a good day” at the door. Adam hesitates at the door and waits for his teacher, Elena, to welcome him. Even with her cheerful, “Adam, we’re so glad to see you,” he remains at the door until she goes to him and takes his hand. Keeley, who is 5 years old, spots Adam and immediately begins organizing his play: “Adam, you’re going to be the kid and I’m the bus driver. Pretend that you’re waiting here for me to pick you up.” Just moments before, Keeley brought 4-year-old Amanda into the bus play and resisted Amanda’s attempt to be the bus driver. Not only has Keeley lined up six chairs in a row to create her bus but she also has a steering wheel and a hat for her accessories.

As the children are riding along, we hear Keeley ask, “Where do you want to get off?” Adam says, “Home,” rather softly, but Amanda says, “Broadway Drive, please.” Adam looks a bit unhappy and says that he does not want to play. He continues to sit in his bus seat, however, as Keeley engages other children in the bus play. After another two minutes, Amanda steps out of the bus and says emphatically, “I don’t want to play any more.” When the bus play ends, Keeley arranges the chairs in front of the puppet theater, then looks about the room. She approaches 5-year-old Olivia and 4-year-old Andrew, who are completing puzzles. “Those are easy puzzles,” says Keeley. Andrew returns the boast: “I can do puzzles with a hundred pieces.” “So can I,” echo Keeley and Olivia. “Would you like to help me make a puppet show?” asks Keeley. “You can be the prince and princess and live in a castle with a gatekeeper,” she continues. “Who will be our audience?” asks Olivia. “I’ll get Miss Elena to watch us,” Keeley responds as she looks for her teacher. Later, we learn that Keeley’s puppet character is Merlin the royal magician. The other two children don’t seem to know about Merlin, so she explains his role in the royal palace.

During this time, Adam has been sitting near the block area, playing with a few small blocks but mostly watching Leandra, age 4, and Ronald, age 3½, build a large structure. When their building looks like it is spreading in his direction, Adam scoots back away from it. When Miss Elena sits down on the floor next to him and asks him what he would like to do, he mumbles that he doesn’t know. Together, they watch Leandra and Ronald drive little cars all over the block area and into their recently constructed parking garage. “Now we’re parking and going to work” and “It’s time to go home from work” are the dominant themes for about 10 minutes. Soon the two children begin playing independently of each other, building other structures and driving their cars.

JOURNAL 2.1 After watching these preschool children for just a few minutes, you can begin to predict and make assumptions about development and dispositions. Consider Keeley. How would you describe her disposition? What about Adam? Does Keeley’s development seem to be what you would expect for a 5-year-old? Write your thoughts in your journal.

If you could watch Keeley and Adam for several days—which would be appropriate before coming to any conclusions about them—you would see that Keeley consistently is a “take charge” kind of child. She is an organizer, she is self-assured, and she is very social. These are some dispositions we would attribute to Keeley. However, if you watched Adam for several days, you would see a child quite different from the one you saw in the brief episode. On the morning we watched, Adam was just recovering from being ill and had returned to his class with some uncertainty. Generally, he is independent and energetic. You would likely describe Adam’s dispositions as curious and sensitive if you could watch him on a day when he feels well. Now you are probably coming up with some understanding of the term disposition.

Defining Disposition

A disposition is a tendency to exhibit frequently, consciously, and voluntarily a pattern of behavior that is directed to a broad goal (Katz, 1993a). Another way of referring to
a person’s disposition is her temperament. In addition to promoting children’s development in our work, dispositions are important goals for our efforts. Adam’s parents have nurtured his disposition to be curious by providing a stimulating home environment and interesting experiences. From the time he was an infant, they gave him a lot of freedom to explore and ask questions. If you were to observe Keeley in her home, you would see that her disposition to take command and be self-assured has also been nurtured by her mother, who supports Keeley’s control over her environment, her decision making, and her activities. Keeley helps plan the week’s menus and determines how the furniture is arranged in her room. These individual dispositions of Adam’s and Keeley’s are further nurtured in their preschool program.

Defining Development

What did you notice about Keeley’s development? Consider her language. Think about what she was able to do—that is, her physical and social skills. How does she handle situations emotionally? Over a period of time, you would see Keeley’s consistent creation of dramatic play situations, her flexibility with changing conditions in the class, her ease in initiating conversations and activity with adults and children, her understanding of concepts and information, her frequent attempts to read, and her application of skills in puzzle making, painting, writing, climbing, and skipping. When you watched Keeley, did you notice her physical development, her cognitive development, her social development, and her emotional development?

Observing children’s development guides our decisions about how to create their environments, select their instructional and play materials, plan their activities, and provide guidance when needed. What is development? A simple definition is the series of changes that occur in humans from birth to death. The most exciting aspect of being an early childhood professional is that you have the opportunity to observe and support those changes in young children.

Basic Principles of Development

With a reminder to attend to children’s individuality, we move now to the basic principles of development. Many of the principles refer to development as learning, so we will use those words interchangeably. Each of the principles will be discussed before we describe the developmental characteristics of children at specific ages. The descriptions have been developed from years of observations by early childhood educators who have extensive experiences and expertise. As we continue observing children throughout this book, developmental characteristics will provide a beginning framework for what you will someday plan and provide for children. As you meet Luke, Felipe, and Jodie in later chapters, you will add detail to the framework and better understand their development.

Even with the constantly changing body of knowledge about child development, there is wide agreement about a few principles that help explain how children develop and learn. Later, in Chapter 3, we will talk about more sophisticated ideas and theories from important thinkers in our profession, but for now, let’s look at six basic principles of development:

1. Development and learning are characterized by individual variation. This principle is the foundation of any theory of development. Children have different genetic make-ups, they come from different home environments, they have different experiences, and they will grow and learn at different rates and in different ways. In Chapter 4, you will meet three brothers, Chimieti, Otioli, and Wamalwa. Even though they have been raised by the same parents in the same home, they are vastly dissimilar. Their dispositions are different and their development has been different. “Each of them has been so individual—it certainly makes parenting interesting,” said Francis, their father.
2. Development occurs in a fairly predictable sequence. Some say that development moves from awareness to exploration to inquiry to utilization (NAEYC, 1997a). Others describe the progression as moving from simple to complex, whether it be physical development or cognitive development. The progression has also been described as moving from general to specific. The word predictable does not mean that children do not move through the sequence in individual ways. For example, Chimieti and Otioli both liked to climb at a young age, but Wamalwa is far more adventurous and creative in his climbing pursuits than either of his brothers ever were.

3. Children learn and develop well when their needs are met. Those needs include physical and emotional needs as well as social needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs reminds us that basic needs of food and shelter, as well as emotional safety and a sense of belonging, must be met before humans can begin to attain other needs. You will read about other ideas from Maslow in the next chapter. Ideally, children’s needs would be met consistently at home and in schools or other programs, but we live in a society that does not assure that those basic needs are being met for all children. Consequently, those of us in the early childhood profession must often take care of hunger, fears, and loneliness in children before we can begin to teach or facilitate development. Remember when Adam came to his preschool after being ill? His insecurity kept him from joining in the play. He needed a lot of reassurance before he could truly participate.

4. Children learn from interacting with the environment and with other children and adults. The physical interactions children have as they touch, explore, manipulate, and experiment with the physical world around them promotes their physical and cognitive development. The social interactions children have as they watch, play, and work with others, and as they gradually cooperate with others promotes their cognitive, social, and emotional development. All the toys and materials you see in a preschool or child care center contribute to each child’s development. The adults and the child’s peers are major contributors to development.

5. Children learn from play. Children’s play, sometimes called “work” by them, promotes development in all aspects of growth. Play is the best context for children’s learning and development in that it is open ended and free, children have control over it, it can be done alone or with others, it can even occur without any materials or equipment, and it can take place in many settings. Play comes naturally to children, so it makes sense that they learn from it. In addition, play materials have been shown to have an effect on children’s cognition, development of cognitive skills, and academic readiness (Bodrova & Leong, 2004). The type of play materials can also impact children’s social interaction (Sutterby & Frost, 2006). Those are just a few of the developmental effects of play. They support the advocacy of NAEYC for play as a foundation of early childhood education programs.

6. Children construct their own knowledge. This idea is a fairly recent one. In the past, educators talked about children making discoveries as they played and interacted with others, but only recently have educators described what happens as children construct their own knowledge. It is what we are asking you to do in this book—that is, construct your own knowledge. In the beginning of this chapter, we did not define disposition for you. We hinted at its meaning, then we had you observe Keeley and see if you could describe her disposition. In other words, we left it to you to create your own definition, your own understanding. This principle is exemplified in our request to you to reflect on and respond to the journal entries every so often in each chapter. We’re encouraging you to construct your own knowledge.
JOURNAL 2.2  Return for a minute to the scene in the mixed-aged class and watch Keeley and Adam again. See if you can find evidence of the basic principles of development in their play and interactions. Did you see them construct their own knowledge? What did they do? If Keeley and Adam did not have their basic needs met, what might you have seen them doing?

The basic principles we’ve listed are very broad; we will elaborate on them later. For now, we ask you to keep them in mind as we describe characteristics of each of the ages of children included in this book. We will be looking at children from birth to age 8, because those are the typical parameters of early childhood education. That is not to say that there are not some 10- and 11-year-olds out there who can be described with similar developmental descriptions. For our purposes of creating some generalizations about development, we will look at infants (birth to 24 months), toddlers (12 months to 36 months), preschoolers (3 to 5 years), kindergarten learners (5 to 6 years), and primary-grade learners (6 to 8 years). You may have noticed an overlap between infants and toddlers, and that was intentional. Because children develop so differently, some children are considered infants at 18 months and others are considered toddlers at 18 months. The variety of early childhood programs classifies those two groups differently, so we tried to encompass all the possibilities.

Why Study Development?

The information we have today about child development comes from a wide variety of sources. It has been said that the body of knowledge about children’s development doubles every three years. Today’s knowledge comes from studies in psychology, sociology, linguistics, health, anthropology, history, and education. This may sound overwhelming, but it serves as a reminder of how important it is to be constantly watching children to learn about their development. The recent changes in NAEYC’s standards for programs and professional preparation of early childhood educators have been prompted by changes in the knowledge base of the early childhood profession. Major reports from the National Research Council have synthesized research on the science of learning and integrated child development studies (2000), again expanding our understandings of early childhood. NAEYC believes that all early childhood professionals should have a broad knowledge of development across the birth-to-age 8 range regardless of what age child or what kind of program they intend as a career focus. Many research studies and significant theories about development will guide us as we observe children and make decisions about their learning. Why study development? The answer is decision making. Using what we know and observe about children’s development guides our decisions about their environment, their activities, and how we interact with them.

USING DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDES.  To assist us in understanding what we see when we watch children, there are normal developmental guides—indicators of what a typical 4-year-old or toddler looks like. Descriptions of normative development—what we know about so-called typical 4-year-old or 18-month-old children—are sort of an average developmental level. Talking about normative development comes with a caution to remember that each child is different. We must observe children with constant attention to the individuality of humans. There really is no such thing as a typical toddler or a typical 4-year-old. With young children especially, we know that development is happening so fast that their understandings and their skills change from day to day. For example, Keeley’s language is expanding rapidly and her coordination is smoothing out right in front of her teacher’s eyes. Her development may slow down for a few months and then suddenly accelerate. Children’s rates of growth and development vary tremendously, so any developmental guidelines must take individuality into account.
PREVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILES. To begin, we will provide a developmental snapshot of each of the age groups we listed for early childhood education. The profiles will not be detailed. Perhaps you have been around children of all the ages described by early childhood. If so, you have a beginning understanding of what each age is like. If not, begin to take notice of children in your community—in the grocery store or library, on the bus, or in the center where you work.

In the chapters that follow, you will meet children of each age and observe them intensely at home and in a program or class where they spend their days. Those chapters will develop a more in-depth understanding of normative development of each age, while introducing the individual differences of the children in our stories. You will notice and describe their developmental characteristics, draw conclusions about them, and mentally plan environments and activities for them (constructing your own learning). We will also have in-depth conversations about the development of Ibrahim (Chapter 8), Keeley (Chapter 10), and Jodie (Chapter 12) to get you ready for your role as an early childhood professional.

Studying Infants

Before describing infant development, it is appropriate to think about what happens before an infant is born. In today’s society, with multiple stresses on families, with many teens giving birth, and with children born to adults who do not receive good prenatal care, your understanding of infant development would be incomplete without a look at the situation before birth.

Before Birth

The following factors help us focus on the situation before, during, and after birth that directly influence how a child will develop. They include:

- Family economics (resources, needs, and limits)
- Family support system
- Family health (physical, emotional, and social)
- Community and dominant themes within
- Educational levels of family members
- Cultural background of family
- Family size
- Family attitudes toward pregnancy, children, education

The behaviors and attitudes of parents directly influence the growth and development of a child before birth (Black & Puckett, 2000). Today’s infants may be born to a homeless couple, to a drug-addicted family, or to a violent home. Birth may follow a pregnancy characterized and influenced by undernutrition, alcohol abuse, or depression about having an unwanted child. All of these factors will have an effect on how babies develop. In contrast, babies are also born to healthy parents, as you will see in many of our chapters. In most cases, babies are wanted and cherished. Their environments are often nurturing, stimulating, and secure. So what are infants like? How can we describe them in terms of development?

Infant Development

In the past, infants were not given credit for being able to do much, but today, people are aware of infants’ incredible capacities. From the moment they are born, they must make a number of physiological adjustments that begin with breathing, eating, and eliminating. They adjust from a very secure, warm, and sheltered environment within their mothers to
one of varied stimuli, less security, and different temperatures. For these reasons, the first
four weeks, the neonatal period, is a critical period in infant development.

By the end of the neonatal period, the infant displays a number of inborn movements called
reflexes. If you watch a newborn, you may see survival reflexes—such as breathing, rooting,
sucking, and eye blinks—or primitive reflexes—such as grasping and the startle reflex (which
occurs when a loud noise or sudden movement causes the arms to thrust out from the body).

PHYSICAL AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT. An infant’s physical development is
marked by observable changes in weight and length as well as internal changes of the
central nervous system, bones, and muscles. As the nervous system matures, the bones and
muscles grow and become coordinated. Consequently, the first year of life is one of exciting
motor development—that is, physical development focused on movement. Table 2.1 shows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>MOTOR DEVELOPMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to 3 months</td>
<td>Supports head when in prone position</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifts head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supports weight on elbows</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hands relax from the grasping reflex</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Visually follows a moving person</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pushes with feet against lap when held upright</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Makes reflexive stepping movements when held in a standing position</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sits with support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turns from side to back</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 to 6 months</td>
<td>Slaps at bath water</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kicks feet when prone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Plays with toes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reaches but misses dangling object</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shakes and stares at toy placed in hand</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Head self-supported when held at shoulder</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Turns from back to side</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sits with props</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Makes effort to sit alone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exhibits crawling behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rocks on all fours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Draws knees up and falls forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 to 9 months</td>
<td>Rolls from back to stomach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Crawls using both hands and feet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sits alone steadily</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pulls to standing position in crib</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raises self to sitting posture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Successfully reaches and grasps toy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transfers object from one hand to the other</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stands up by furniture</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cruises along crib rail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes stepping movements around furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 to 12 months</td>
<td>Exhibits “mature” crawling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cruises holding on to furniture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Walks with two hands held</td>
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<td>Sits without falling</td>
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<td>Stands alone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>May walk alone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Attempts to crawl up stairs</td>
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<td>Grasps object with thumb and forefinger</td>
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the changes, or developmental milestones, of motor development during the infant’s first year. These changes in the infant’s ability to move and manipulate his environment have many implications for the kind of environment he needs, the appropriate play materials, and the types of activities from which he can learn and enjoy.

If we asked you to list what kind of environment and materials you would provide for an infant, you might write a safe place, soft surfaces, and carefully selected objects that can be held and tasted by the infant. Each characteristic of infant development will give you an indication of what kind of setting and what sorts of activities and interactions are appropriate.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT. Normal social and emotional development of infants is characterized by the beginnings of trust and attachment, an array of emotions, crying and other forms of communication, and the start of social cognition. Each of these developments has important implications for the adults who interact with infants. Trust is learned by infants when their care is nurturing and predictable. The youngest infant soon realizes if she can depend on being comforted when upset, or changed when wet, or fed when hungry. This is the beginning of trust. In addition to trusting adults, infants learn to trust themselves. They learn that they have the capacity to get what they need by communicating with others. For example, an infant soon realizes that when she cries, one of the parents will comfort her; thus begins the baby’s awareness of her ability to get what she needs.

Attachment is a complex kind of bonding and an emotional relationship between an infant and a significant adult (mother, father, or caregiver). The observable characteristics are mutual affection and the desire or need for proximity of each other. Emotionally healthy infants form attachments gradually during their first year. Bowlby (1962/1982) describes a sequence of four phases that characterize the development of attachment (Figure 2.1).

During phase 3, two related developments occur. Infants develop separation anxiety and stranger anxiety. For your work with young children, it will be important to understand these fears. Separation anxiety occurs when the attachment between infant and adult becomes quite intense. It is understandable, then, that the infant becomes very upset when separated from the adult. For a caregiver or other early childhood professional, the onset of separation anxiety means that the infant will need extra reassurance and support, gradual separations from the important adult, and well-established routines and rituals. Stranger anxiety is actually a healthy indication that the infant recognizes familiar adults and is insecure around those who are unfamiliar. Again, there are ways to ease the anxiety. Infants need long periods of unhurried time to get used to someone new. The security of a familiar object (blanket, stuffed animal, or toy) and familiar people (sibling, parent, or caregiver) help the infant become comfortable with someone new.

DEVELOPMENT IN AN UNHEALTHY BEGINNING. We have been describing what happens as healthy infants develop, but what occurs for those who do not have healthy beginnings? One characteristic that is in contrast to attachment is disorganization or conflicted feelings and behaviors expressing stress or anxiety. Not surprisingly, there is a connection between infant disorganization and parental neglect and abuse, maternal depression, low socioeconomic status, and no family support. In addition to the stress and anxiety observed in some infants, a failure to thrive characterizes some babies. Infants who are neglected or deprived of parental nurturance and stimulation fail to grow and develop normally. When you look back at those factors that influence how a child will develop, you can understand how those factors could result in deprivation or neglect. For instance, if family economics are drastic, and there is little food or heat in a home, it will be difficult to provide for a baby’s needs. Likewise, if the family does not have a support system, new parents may become stressed by an infant’s cry and not respond in healthy ways. Caring for an infant often requires 24-hour care and good physical and emotional health on the part of the adults. When the situation is supportive of infant development, babies are capable of rapid growth and development. They are able to accomplish so much in a short time. One area of rapid development that you cannot
help but notice is infant communication. It is a developmental area that continues to be studied and is providing new insights about babies.

**INFANT COMMUNICATION.** Research indicates that fetuses can hear their mothers from inside the womb and may even be able to distinguish differing patterns in the language that they hear (Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 1999, p. 47). It has been shown that infants can notice the difference in rhythms of different languages. Babies respond with excitement, vocalization, and eye contact to “baby talk” because it exaggerates sounds and facial expressions. By age 3 to 4 months, babies are “cooing” and making all sorts of sounds, especially in interactions with others. By 9 to 12 months old, babies carry on lengthy exchanges of language and are quite creative and persevering in making their wants and needs understood.

**Infancy and Dispositions**

Although infants go through rapid changes in some aspects of their development, their dispositions begin to emerge slowly. Individual temperaments might seem evident at birth, but a number of factors (feeding, mood of parents, comfort, order of birth) will probably influence a baby's true disposition. If you were to watch an infant for a period of time, you could probably predict her disposition. Recently, one of us observed a young adult with a very relaxed and accepting disposition. When we commented on her disposition, her mother recalled, “Even as a baby, she was like that.”

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**Bowlby’s Sequence for the Development of Attachment**

**Phase 1 (Birth to 8–12 weeks)**
**Indiscriminate Responsiveness to Humans**
During this phase, infants orient to persons in their environment, visually tracking them, grasping and reaching for them, and smiling and babbling. The infant often ceases to cry upon seeing a face or hearing a voice. These behaviors sustain the attentions of others and thus their proximity to the infant, which is the infant’s goal.

**Phase 2 (3 to 6 months)**
**Focusing on Familiar People**
The infant’s behaviors toward others remain virtually the same except that they are more marked in relation to the mother or perhaps the father. Social responses begin to become more selective, however, with the social smile reserved for familiar people. Strangers receive a long, intent stare. Cooing, babbling, and gurgling occur with familiar people. A principal attachment figure begins to emerge, usually the mother.

**Phase 3 (6 months to 3 years)**
**Active Proximity Seeking**
Infants show greater discrimination in their interactions with people. They become deeply concerned for the attachment figure’s presence and cry when that person starts to leave. Infants will monitor the attachment figure’s movements, calling out to them or using whatever means of locomotion they have to maintain proximity to them. The attachment figure serves as a base from which to explore and is followed when departing and greeted warmly upon return. Certain other people may become subsidiary attachment figures; however, strangers are now treated with caution and will soon evoke alarm and withdrawal.

During phase 3, two very predictable fears emerge. Separation anxiety occurs as the relationship between the infant and the attachment figure becomes more intense and exclusive. The infant cries, sometimes quite vociferously, upon the departure of the attachment figure and exhibits intense joy upon their reunion. Stranger anxiety is another characteristic fear of phase 3. Occurring around 7 to 8 months, the infant’s stranger anxiety is characterized by lengthy stares and subsequent crying at the sight of an unfamiliar person. Alarmed, the infant will cling tightly to the attachment figure and resist letting go.

**Phase 4 (3 years to the end of childhood)**
**Partnership Behavior**
Prior to this phase, the child is unable to consider the attachment figure’s intentions. For instance, the suggestion that “I’ll be right back” is meaningless to the child, who will insist on going along anyway. By age 3, the child has developed a greater understanding of parental intent and plans and can envision the parent’s behavior while separated. The child is now more willing and able to let go and can be more flexible.

Babies grow and develop so rapidly that those around them are usually amazed that the babies have become toddlers in such a short time. This fact is a great reminder to stop and watch babies now, for they will make tremendous changes rapidly.

**Studying Toddlers**

It is difficult to say when infancy stops and toddlerhood begins; in fact, it is different for every child, which is why we gave it a range of 12 to 24 months. For our purposes, let’s say that a toddler is one who begins walking and talking. Some call toddlerhood a transition between infancy and childhood. It is a very exciting time to observe and care for a child, because so many major changes occur and growth is so noticeable. Certainly, you will never get bored around a toddler. When you meet Ibrahim and his toddler friends in Chapter 8, you will be amazed at the energy of their parents and teachers.

**Toddler Development**

During toddlerhood, children move from almost complete dependence on adults and others to the beginnings of self-reliance. They can move fairly well, do things for themselves, and express what they want. In addition to becoming self-reliant, toddlers begin to learn and comply with the rules and values of society; that is, they become socialized.

**SOCIALIZATION.** As children show that they can understand, social rules and values are actively imposed on them by parents and others. Learning theorists suggest that young children comply because they want to maintain closeness with parents and have their needs met. Some educators think that very young children comply with adult expectations and requests because they are born with the desire to please. This is especially reasonable if a child is in a pleasant and supportive environment and has loving caregivers. That same compliance of a toddler may be misinterpreted as a readiness for some new skill, so we urge caution when observing the child who goes along with a rule or routine.

**JOURNAL 2.3** Make a list of situations in which adults try to get children to do things for which they are not ready. Now make another list, showing the reasons why adults expect and request such behaviors.

Toddlers begin to learn social rules and values (Honig, 2002) and become more competent in their interactions with adults and with other children (Howes, 1988). They can observe and interpret the actions of others, imitate them, and maintain a sequence of interaction with others. Most of the interactions of toddlers are object centered, meaning that they focus more on an object (such as a toy) rather than on an activity. One of the most obvious developmental changes in a toddler is his ability to separate from his parent or caregiver and go off to play or explore elsewhere. The toddler will often check to see if mom or dad is still in the room or will call out to her caregiver from across the room, but the distance appears to be comfortable. During toddlerhood, children also develop an ability called social referencing. This is the ability to “read” facial expressions and tones of voice as cues for what to do. Many a young child has looked up at a parent's face and expressed dismay at the parent’s sad or angry facial expression.

During this stage, most toddlers begin talking; therefore, language development will demand much of our attention as we study this age group. In addition to learning words, toddlers begin to learn the rules, or conventions, for combining sounds into words and words into sentences. This is a fairly sophisticated process by itself, but it must be developed in the complexity of social situations that can change the rules, so it is an amazing
accomplishment. Starting with the youngest toddler, we will look at the major tasks of language learning in a progression of typical development.

**LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT.** The first task in language development is learning sound patterns. In infancy, we hear babies cry and coo and babble, and toward the end of the first year, we hear patterned speech. It sounds like babbling, but it has a pattern to it that resembles the intonation and form of the language that the child is hearing from those around him. Once the toddler recognizes and can produce a small number of phonemes (groups of sounds, the smallest speech units), he begins to say his first words and to recognize words.

Toddlers quickly develop expressive language—that is, the ability to produce language forms. That development follows a sequence. The child begins with a big language learning task—learning words and their meanings. The first words are, of course, the names of familiar people and items. Can you think of a list of predictable first words? Early vocabulary also includes social commands, such as “Me”; movement, such as “Go bye-bye”; and expressions of “No.” During this learning period, parents and others who interact with the toddler influence the range of vocabulary and how it is used. Adult language patterns will often determine the toddler’s language patterns. For example, if a parent asks a great number of “What?” questions of the toddler, the toddler will develop extensive vocabulary to label things.

The average toddler develops vocabulary slowly until about age 18 months, then the acquisition of new words increases dramatically. Between 1 and 2 years of age, the range of new words learned is between 100 and 1,000 words. That wide range is another reminder of individual differences. During this phase of toddlerhood, we hear young children attempting to make plurals of their words, or changing the tenses. They make a lot of mistakes in the process, often causing adults to chuckle at the attempts.

For most of toddlerhood, children are in a one-word stage, meaning that their speech is limited to using one word at a time. With their use of single words, however, toddlers may be communicating more than a simple label. For example, when a toddler points to her mother and says “Momma,” she may simply be acknowledging her mother. But when she holds up her mother’s scarf, and says “Momma,” she may be saying “Momma’s scarf,” or when she tugs at her mother’s hand and says “Momma,” she may be saying “Momma, come.” This is an example of a holophrase, and toddlers soon have a number of holophrases that communicate their needs and wants as well as enable them to hold a conversation with others. What you will learn about toddlers’ speech is that you must not only listen well but you must also notice the situation, observe the toddlers’ gestures, and be ready to guess. They want to talk with you, and their language development will be enhanced if you are able to respond appropriately to their early attempts at conversation.

At around 18 to 24 months of age, toddlers begin to put two words together into two-word sentences. They are usually very simple ideas and are generally expressed with a noun and a verb, and occasionally an adjective. Such sentences capture the gist of what the toddler wants to say, and adults again must maintain an awareness of the entire situation in order to interpret them appropriately. When you meet Ibrahim in Chapter 8, you will notice how his mother pays close attention to his talk in order to more accurately understand Ibrahim’s ideas and needs. As an early childhood professional, you will need to follow her example and be a very good listener.

The stages of language development in Figure 2.2 go beyond two-word sentences, because some toddlers continue to develop their language and use telegraphic sentences, joined sentences, and even occasionally overgeneralizations. The figure shows the sequence of language development that you will observe when you spend time around toddlers and preschoolers.

Along with the development of language that has such dramatic growth during toddlerhood, there is also the beginning of a capacity for representation. The children begin to use symbols to represent things. Language use is one example of this capacity, but another is seen in pretend play. For example, toddlers will pretend to ride a large rectangular block or to drink out of a cylinder block. Young toddlers will play with actual
objects, such as dolls, cars and trucks, and animals. Older toddlers (near 2 years) represent other things in their play—blankets and kitchen objects, for instance. When Keeley was 20 months old, she rolled up a cloth and carried it as a baby, and she expected everyone else to treat it like a baby.

**PHYSICAL AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT.** Physically, toddlers do not grow as rapidly as they did during infancy, but their motor development is impressive. A young toddler walks unsteadily, partly because he still has some baby fat and because his legs make up only about 30 percent of his height. An early childhood classroom for toddlers often has furnishings that can be used for purposes of steadying and gaining balance. As a toddler develops and gains experience, his walking becomes well coordinated. From there, the toddler jumps, runs, and climbs. His large motor skills increase dramatically because his large muscles (in the arms, trunk, and legs) are maturing. He becomes more coordinated and can use wheel toys, explore climbing structures, and throw and kick balls.

During toddlerhood, small muscles also develop and mature. A toddler learns to manipulate objects well and begins building with blocks and other toys. His abilities to reach, grasp, manipulate, and release toys and other items become more precise during this developmental period. It takes a great amount of experience or practice, so it is important to provide appropriate

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**Stages of Language Development**

**Sounds**
From birth infants make and respond to many sounds. Crying, gurgling, and cooing are important first steps in the language-learning process.

**Babbling**
All of the sounds found in all languages are encompassed in children’s first babbling. Gradually, babbling becomes more specific with native language syllables being consistently practiced. Before the end of their first year, children engage in pseudo-language, babbling that mimics the native language in its intonation and form.

**Holophrases**
The first word evolves to many single words or syllables that stand for a variety of meaningful sentences or phrases in different situations. Car said while looking out the window may mean, “Look at the car outside”; car said while standing next to the toy shelf may mean, “I want my toy car.” A vocabulary of holophrases enables children to communicate with familiar caregivers. Children use successive holophrases to increase their communicative power: Car (pause) go to indicate “I want to go for a ride.”

**Two-Word Sentences**
Two-word sentences appear between eighteen and twenty months of age and express ideas concerning relationships: “Mommy sock” (possessor-possession), “Cat sleeping” (actor-action), “Drink milk” (action-object), and so on. A vocabulary of about 300 words is typical.

**Telegraphic Sentences**
The next stage of language are sentences that are short and simple. Similar to a telegram, they omit function words and endings that contribute little to meaning: “Where Daddy go?” “Me push truck.”

**Joined Sentences**
As language development proceeds, children join related sentences logically and express ideas concerning time and spatial relationships. They come to understand social expectations for language use and begin to use adult forms of language. Vocabularies expand rapidly, the ability to use words increases, and children intuitively acquire many of the rules of language. By age three children have vocabularies of nearly 1,000 words.

**Overgeneralizations**
As children become more sophisticated in their language, they overgeneralize rules in ways that are inconsistent with common usage; for example, “I comed home” for “I came home” (sometimes called creative grammar). Correct forms are temporarily replaced as rules are internalized.

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**FIGURE 2.2**

materials and activities for children at this age. At this time, the coordination of eyes and hands improves greatly, and the toddler begins to master tasks such as assembling simple puzzles, matching faces, and so on. Figure 2.3 summarizes some of the typical large and small motor skills that you will see when you watch the toddlers in Chapter 8.

Toddlers do not have well-developed perceptual motor skills—that is, the combination of what they see and the body movements to match what they perceive. They often bump into furniture or each other, or they try to stuff large toys into bags that are smaller than the toy. When they move to music, most toddlers do not really move to the rhythm or beat; they just move their bodies. At this age, children simply are not ready to process the information that they are taking in with their ears or eyes or touch. There is, however, one aspect of their experience that toddlers begin to organize and acknowledge: awareness of body and gender.

**GENDER AWARENESS.** It is not surprising that toddlers develop body awareness as they acquire and repeat new motor skills. From the time they are in the crib and discover that they can bang their bed against the wall by rocking back and forth, they become aware of their power and their ability to make things happen. As their motor activities increase, toddlers begin to form mental images of themselves. They also begin to touch body parts and later name those parts. This is the time when toilet training may begin, so there is much opportunity for the interest in body parts to heighten.

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By the second year of life, the play behaviors of children begin to display those different expectations. During this time, children’s attention to body parts and comfortable responses from adults who use correct terms to name body parts and functions eventually lead to curiosity about why girls and boys are different. Toddlers are not ready for very elaborate or technical explanations—just simple answers given in a matter-of-fact manner.

**JOURNAL 2.4**

This is a time to check your sensitivities and comfort with children’s bodies and gender awareness. Compose a response to a 2-year-old girl who asks you why her male toddler peer has a penis and she doesn’t. What would you say to a 2½-year-old who asks, “How did the baby get in my mommy’s tummy?”

Even if you are completely comfortable in giving answers to these questions, be sure to check with your class peers and instructor. You will probably hear an array of diverse responses and you may find that some feel much better and more appropriate for toddlers to hear than others.

Entire books are devoted to the developmental achievements of toddlerhood, but this brief section gives you a beginning glimpse of what a toddler is like. When you read about Ibrahim and his friends in Chapter 8, you will develop many more insights about this fascinating period as well as direction for how to promote toddler development in your early childhood professional role.

**Implications of Toddler Development for Early Childhood Programs**

All the developmental changes that occur during toddlerhood have implications for the adults who support these young children.

**ENVIRONMENTS FOR TODDLERS.** Toddler curiosity and the beginnings of independence require specific environments and behaviors on the part of adults. First, there are issues of safety. The physical safety of toddlers demands constant watchfulness and an environment that protects yet stimulates exploration. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1997a) demonstrates some of the important characteristics of that environment:

- Floor coverings are appropriate for the activities that occur there—shock-absorbent tiles for open areas where toddlers push and pull toys around and for art, eating, and water and sand play areas. Low-pile, easy-to-clean carpeting or nonslip area rugs cover areas for quiet play. (p. 86)
- The environment contains private spaces with room for no more than two children and that are easily supervised by adults. (p. 87)
- Caregivers directly supervise toddlers by sight and sound, even when they are sleeping. (p. 89)
- Adults do safety checks of all areas both indoors and outside several times a day to assure that they are safe (e.g., electric outlets are covered, no objects are on the floor that a toddler could choke on, no splinters or nails are exposed on furnishings and equipment). (p. 89)

**GUIDANCE FOR TODDLERS.** Another kind of safety for toddlers is the issue of emotional security. These children are forming relationships, and their relationships with caregivers and educators is a critical one. The adults in the lives of toddlers need to be constant and committed to these youngsters. Toddlers are not yet good communicators, so adults need to know them well and be able to determine and respond to their needs and cues.

**UNDERSTANDINGS FOR EDUCATORS.** Another implication of toddler development is one of balancing opportunities for them to develop initiative, autonomy, and
self-reliance with the routines, schedules, and rules that they seem to need. Toddlers want to try everything themselves, to do everything themselves, and to be in charge. At the same time, they have a limited capacity to communicate to others, to share or cooperate with others, and to take care of themselves. Bredekamp and Copple (1997) remind us, “A healthy toddler’s inner world is filled with conflicting feelings—dependence and independence, pride and shame, confidence and doubt, self-awareness and confusion, fear and omnipotence, hostility and intense love, anger and tenderness, initiative and passivity” (p. 68). Those contrasts are a real challenge to the adults who intend to support the toddler. When toddlers feel that support, and know that they can count on those adults, they are able to face their own frustrations, struggles, and disappointments. Those adults need to make wise decisions about routines, schedules, and rules, so that they are a source of support to the toddler rather than a source of defeat. Listen to an early childhood professional who provides such support to toddlers:

ETHAN: TESTING LIMITS

Two-year-old Ethan has brought a wheelbarrow in from the playground and is pushing it around the room, banging into furniture and other children. He seems to have a lot of energy and is quite thrilled with his new skill with the wheelbarrow. After watching him for a brief time, Mimi, his caregiver, approaches him with, “Ethan, you are pushing the wheelbarrow so well, but we don’t have enough room inside for the wheelbarrow.” She quickly explains that the wheelbarrow may hurt his friends, and gives him a choice of taking it back outside or pushing a truck in the block area. She adds, “I would like to watch so you can show me how strong you are.” Ethan pauses, holding tightly to the wheelbarrow, and tries to push it again. Mimi repeats his choices and says, “It’s your choice, Ethan.” He decides to go back outside, and he takes Mimi’s hand, indicating that he wants her to accompany him.

That is the delicate balance of limitations and freedom that toddlers need from the adults in their lives in order to develop autonomy and initiative. For those who care for toddlers, that balance is one of the many challenges facing early childhood educators. Those challenges make toddler and infant care costly and not very accessible, or often mediocre and inadequate when affordable. Fortunately, children in the preschool years have many excellent care and educational programs to meet their needs.

Studying Preschool-Aged Children (Ages Three to Five Years)

We are now talking about a much wider age span, so we will see a great deal of development and growth. Children of ages 3 to 5 are grouped together because their growth and development are so fluid. Often, you can see a group of 3- to 5-year-olds and be unable to tell who is what age. The individual differences are so prominent by then that it is impossible to describe a typical 3-, 4-, or 5-year-old. We will provide a brief profile because you will be meeting a group of preschool-aged children in Chapter 9. By then, you will have developed a better understanding from watching and listening to them. We begin with their physical and motor development because it’s so prominent.

Physical and Motor Development

LARGE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT. Some 3-year-olds are still developing the skills we described for toddlerhood, but others are well developed and have the capacity to run and jump. Age 3 is a time when fine motor skills such as cutting with scissors and
drawing with crayons or markers are developing rapidly. Many 3-year-olds can copy simple shapes, draw faces, construct simple puzzles, and build with blocks. This is also a time for becoming independent or self-sufficient. These children need less help from the adults in their lives because they are developing the coordination and fine motor skills to do many tasks and because they have the motivation to try. By the end of age 3, children are ready for complex tasks that require extensive movement and coordination. In terms of motor development, preschoolers are ready for limitless physical activities. Their energy is overwhelming and their motor development is related to their abilities in other aspects of development.

By 4 and 5 years of age, the physical development of children is quite advanced, both in terms of skills and growth. These children are skilled at skipping, riding tricycles or bicycles, jumping, climbing, turning cartwheels, and throwing and catching balls. The body proportions of preschool children change significantly and that change contributes to these new skills. Their legs have lengthened and their bones have become harder and stronger. Consequently, they have increased body strength and coordination that enables them to perform various large motor skills. Gallahue (1982) describes the advances of motor development during preschool years with the following characteristics:

1. **Coordination.** The rhythmical integration of motor and sensory systems into a harmonious working together of body parts
2. **Speed.** The ability to move from one point to another in the shortest time possible over a short distance
3. **Agility.** The ability to move from point to point as rapidly as possible while making successive movements in different directions
4. **Power.** The ability to perform one maximum explosive force
5. **Balance.** The ability to maintain one’s equilibrium in relationship to the force of gravity in both static and dynamic movement situations (p. 96)

**SMALL MOTOR DEVELOPMENT.** Just as the large muscles become stronger and more coordinated, the small muscles also develop so that fine motor skills become more controlled and precise. The fine motor development of preschoolers improves rapidly, enabling them to write letters and draw shapes with pencils. Some of the precision and coordination evident during this time is called **dexterity.** It can be seen as the children handle small puzzle pieces, master buttons and zippers, and use many adult tools, such as tweezers, tongs, and screwdrivers.

**PERCEPTUAL-MOTOR DEVELOPMENT.** Another aspect of motor development that becomes obvious during this time is **perceptual-motor development.** We are born with sensory abilities (sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste) but our ability to interpret the information provided by our senses takes some time to develop. **Perceptual-motor movements** are a combination of what the child sees or perceives though her senses and the body movements that respond to those perceptions. The beginning of perceptual-motor development is the use of senses. Beginning at infancy, the capacity to take in sensory input is developing. It becomes well refined by the time children are preschoolers.

Two other aspects of perceptual-motor development are beginning during this time: **body/spatial awareness** and temporal awareness. Preschoolers are getting better about avoiding objects and furniture when they are on the move (referred to as **body/spatial awareness**). By age 4 or 5, they can run through an area and miss all of the obstacles, evidencing that they are better aware of their bodies and of the space surrounding them. In terms of **temporal awareness,** preschoolers begin to get a sense of time and sequence through the routines of their day. Most preschoolers will let you know if you skip an activity that is part of their usual sequence of events.

**INDEPENDENCE.** Motor development enhances the growing independence we see in a preschool classroom. The move toward independence or self-sufficiency continues rapidly with increased ability as preschoolers dress themselves, serve and eat meals,
wash their hands and brush their teeth, and organize their own spaces (bedrooms, cubbies, toy shelves, etc.). This same independence means that preschoolers can begin taking more responsibility for themselves. In terms of health and safety, they are able to begin to understand concepts of nutrition and danger, and they can follow simple rules for their own well-being. Later, when we visit Felipe in his preschool, you will see that children of this age can get very involved in rules and quite demanding about their observance.

### Nutrition and Physical Development

In addition to describing preschoolers’ very prominent physical and motor development, we want to discuss a newly emerging body of research. Studies have gone beyond the relationship between nutrition and physical development to probe for impact on cognitive and social competencies. We know that many children in our country are malnourished, but recently we have become aware that many are misnourished (Marcon, 2003, p. 82)—that is, not consuming important nutrients. America’s Children 2002 found that most children’s (ages 2 through 5) diets are poor or in need of improvement, and as they get older, their diet becomes even more insufficient. With the condition of malnutrition or misnourishment are often other conditions, such as less supervision, less stimulation, and less education; thus, the effects of “even mild nutrition can have a negative impact on developmental outcomes” (Children’s Defense Fund, 2002, p. 83).

Unfortunately, the situation regarding nutrition and physical development has worsened since those studies. We are currently seeing increasing numbers of young children who are overweight—approximately 10 percent of children ages 2 to 5 (Sorte & Daeschel, 2006). The most significant contributors to obesity in children are “increased exposure to convenience/fast foods, aggressive food advertising, more sedentary leisure activities, and community environments that support driving rather than walking” (p. 40). The amount of high-fat and high-sugar processed foods consumed by families has increased and the time spent in exercise has dropped.

It is important to consider these concerns because you will need to be a very good observer of children’s development, looking for signs of inadequate nutrition and the health risks of obesity, especially when you watch the physical changes during the preschool span. Throughout this book we will provide current information, strategies, and ideas for helping children develop good health habits and for supporting families to adopt healthy lifestyles.
Social Development

Although preschoolers are still quite egocentric (involved in themselves), they are also quite social. A wonderful scene on a soccer field with a team of 4- and 5-year-old children illustrates these contrasts in development. The soccer game is underway and the children are running down the field toward one of the goals. Five-year-old Tony stops in the middle of the field and calls out to his parents on the side, “Can Eric come over to play today?” The game continues as Tony’s parents urge him to “watch the ball” and he remembers that he is part of a group effort, at least temporarily.

BEGINNINGS OF FRIENDSHIP. The preschool years are characterized by the beginning of friendships. Generally, by age 4, children can maintain friendships. Teachers and caregivers have noticed that children behave differently toward those children that they consider a friend and those that they do not consider a friend. With friends, young children often are more patient, more cooperative, more positive, and less disagreeable (Stroufe, Cooper, & DeHart, 1992). Preschoolers’ abilities to begin and maintain friendships tell us that they have social preferences. By preschool, however, “approximately 10–24% of children are classified as unpopular, while 10–22% are classified as rejected, and 12–20% as neglected” (Kim, 2003, p. 234). These are children who typically do not have the following behaviors:

- Successful entry into the play of a group of children
- Effective verbal assertiveness
- Engagements in complex pretend play
- Demonstration of positive affection toward peers

You may also note that these children display aggressive-hostile behavior, tease their peers, withdraw and play alone, and hover around other children’s play. The first step in assisting these children is to observe their behavior consistently in order to determine what is keeping them from being accepted. From there you can teach children alternative behaviors, modeling the skills they need and creating environments that support all children’s interactions with rules and constructive feedback. When you plan activities for preschoolers, provide many opportunities for practicing social skills so that all children can develop social competence.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE. Another significant development that we see in preschool-aged children is social competence. Social competence is related to the abilities we just described for children’s friendships. Simply defined, it is the ability to engage with peers, to be liked and desired as a playmate, and to be able to interact with peers in mutually satisfying ways. Remember Keeley, who you met earlier in this chapter? She is a good example of a socially competent preschooler. She is liked and even admired by her young friends. Her mom constantly hears from other parents that their children “talk about Keeley all the time” and “want Keeley to come over.” Keeley is friendly and emotionally positive. She gets a lot of attention from other children in her class and she wins struggles with her peers without ever being hostile. Closely observing a child like Keeley will give you ideas for how to support social competence in all children. Within that social development area, you will see many connections to children’s cognitive development.

Cognitive Development

The intellectual development of 4- and 5-year-old children is marked by huge gains in understanding their world. Their use and understanding of symbols that began in toddlerhood is quite advanced. They write and draw symbols, as well as create and use symbols in their play. This is important development for understanding math and science literacy, which children of this age are beginning to pursue. This is a time of extensive “Why?” questions, as children explore their world and try to make meaning of their experiences.
Many of the ideas expressed by preschoolers will strike us as humorous or strange, but these children are operating from a lack of information or misinformation. However, from ages 3 to 5 years, it seems that they are determined to gather as much information as possible. Preschoolers are active learners in ways that are different from the active learning of infants and toddlers. Although they maintain the physical and sensory aspects of their learning, they add concepts, vocabulary, and representation to the process. Thus, they actively construct meaning as they explore the world around them. Instead of just observing and describing events around them, preschoolers try to explain the events.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESCHOOL THINKING.** Although preschool cognition is becoming quite advanced, it is limited developmentally by three characteristics of preschool thinking. The first characteristic is centration, the tendency to consider only one piece of information when multiple pieces are relevant. Second is the preschoolers’ lack of differentiation between reality and appearance, sometimes between pretend and real. Preschool teachers and caregivers are often asked, “Is it real or pretend?” when a story is read. The third characteristic is the lack of memory strategies. Some 4- and 5-year-olds begin to show some simple approaches to remembering. Keeley, for example, can be heard repeating to herself as she descends the stairs in her house, “Don’t forget the backpack.”

**COGNITIVE CHANGES: DEVELOPMENT OF REASONING.** One aspect of children’s thinking that develops during preschool age is causal reasoning. This reasoning begins with children making explanations based on their observations—that is, by appearance. If it gets dark when the child goes to bed, then the reason it gets dark is so that people can go to bed. Later, this reasoning is influenced by an acknowledgment of powerful others (e.g., parents, sun, etc.). You may hear a child explain that the “sun made it get dark by going away.” As children develop more concepts and vocabulary, their causal reasoning becomes more advanced and they are able to offer reasonable cause-and-effect explanations. When you observe preschoolers, you will notice that when they don’t know the reason for something, they will invent one.

Other cognitive changes have been described by Piaget as he observed and discussed children’s cognitive development. In the next chapter, you will read about preschoolers’ abilities in the areas of conservation, serration, and classification. These are major developments in cognition and are especially relevant to the development of preschool-aged children.

**Language Development**

The language development of 4- and 5-year-olds is amazing. They can comprehend extensive vocabulary and concepts: spatial concepts, such as beside and behind; plural and singular forms of nouns, such as mice and mouse; and passive-voice sentences, such as *The plant was watered by Mary.* Their ability to follow directions continues to improve. Children of this age are curious about reading and are developing many of the skills necessary for reading. For instance, they can repeat stories after hearing them and they know that groups of letters represent words. The vocabulary of the preschooler is extensive—from 1,500 to over 2,000 words.

**CHILDREN’S SCRIPTS.** One of the most fascinating developments you will observe in a preschool class is the playing out of scripts. Children of preschool age have become familiar with scenes and accompanying dialogue of everyday activities, such as grocery shopping, going to the doctor’s office, doing laundry at the laundromat, and so forth. You will hear them playing the roles with adult dialogue. Their language development comes through in these scenes; in fact, you can learn a great deal about their language by listening to their scripts. Listen to a pair of preschoolers playing out the family’s morning:
Angela: “Honey, don’t forget your briefcase for work. What time will you be home?”
George: “I have to go to work. Don’t forget to make supper.”
Angela: “Let’s go out to dinner. I don’t want to cook.”
George: “I’m going to catch the bus. Bye.”

Does any of this sound familiar? Most preschoolers’ scripts are quite realistic and their use of language is accurate. Notice, however, that George wasn’t working from the same script that Angela was using. Preschoolers may not listen to each other well but they definitely are paying attention to the adults and world around them.

Another aspect of language development that you will notice is the development of humor. Preschoolers enjoy jokes and riddles. They create jokes of their own and laugh hilariously at them. We adults go along with their jokes and usually laugh at the fact that the jokes are not funny. This ability is one of the enjoyable aspects of working with preschool-aged children.

**Gender Development**

Do you remember in our discussion about toddlers that they can tell you if they are a boy or a girl? You may also remember that gender isn’t a constant for them. By age 3, most children identify themselves as a girl or a boy, but their concept of gender is not well developed. Most will not understand until the age of 5 or 6 that their gender is constant and determined by anatomy, not clothing, hairstyle, or toy preferences (Roberts & Hill, 2003, p. 39). These early years are critical for learning about gender and they are quite influenced by society’s traditional gender role norms. The adults who are in the life of a preschool child will be communicating information about gender by the way they live their lives. Here again, the way adults respond to questions about gender will send important messages to children who are forming their own gender identities and taking on the beginnings of their own gender roles. Another important source of influence and information on children’s understanding of gender is children’s literature. Unfortunately, much of children’s literature continues to present traditional stereotypes, so we must critically examine the books we provide for children. Figure 2.4 provides a kind of checklist for analyzing children’s books for sexism in both illustrations and story content. Still another aspect of development that begins during preschool years is related to awareness of racial differences. Box 2.1 describes what research tells us about how young children respond to racial differences.

**Checklist for Analyzing Children’s Books for Sexism**

**Checking the Illustrations**
- Look at who is doing what in the pictures or photos. Are all the males leading, playing sports, or getting in trouble?
- Are the males rescuing the females?
- Are stereotypes communicated by the illustrations? Is the girl portrayed as meek or weak while the boy looks strong and in charge?
- Is there a token woman in a male-dominated setting or a token male in a female-dominated setting?

**Checking the Content**
- Could the story be told if the gender roles were reversed?
- Are female achievements based on their own initiative and intelligence?
- Is there cooperation between the sexes or competition?
- Are both sexes treated with respect?
- Are both males and females engaged in similar activities?

Source: Adapted from Roberts and Hill (2003, pp. 41–42).
An entire book could be written about the development of 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds because so much growth and development is happening during this time. For now, however, you have a beginning sketch of some characteristics of this age. When you meet Felipe and his friends in Chapter 9, you will learn more about this age group. You will also observe how a preschool program accommodates the rapid development of children of this age.

Considering the multiple facets of development that characterize the growth and learning of a preschool-aged child, you can understand why there are so many preschools with so many different kinds of programs.

Feeney and Moravcik (2005) add a few more questions to ask when selecting books for young children:

- Are the characters portrayed as real people with strengths and weaknesses?
- Do characters grow and change in the course of the story?
- Are the characters represented authentically and respectfully?
- Are females and persons of color portrayed in strong, positive roles?
- Does the book respectfully depict age, ethnicity, culture, status, ability, and gender differences?

Their questions were developed to encourage you to read books that help children understand themselves and others, but we think that they work well for gender development, too.
Studying Children in Kindergarten and Primary Grades (Ages Five to Eight Years)

Children of 5 to 8 years of age are beginning to make the transition to what is called middle childhood. These years are sometimes referred to as the school years because children of this age spend so much of their time in school. The physical growth during this period is not as dramatic as in the earlier years, but children in kindergarten and primary grades make exciting gains in terms of motor abilities. It is also a time of spectacular cognitive growth in the ability to handle complex mental tasks. Socially and emotionally, children of this age are developing the capacity for long-term relationships and secure adulthood. Most educational programs for this age begin to focus primarily on the cognitive aspects of learning, so let’s begin with cognitive development. No less important will be our discussions of that social, emotional, and physical development.

Cognitive Development

If you remember our description of preschoolers’ lack of memory strategies, it won’t be surprising to you that from ages 5 to 8 years, memory abilities exhibit significant change. Children nearing middle childhood develop a variety of memory strategies that are increasingly effective. They also become aware of memory and its use. We saw that awareness beginning when Keeley was trying to remember her backpack.

Changes in Memory Skills. The first change we see in middle childhood is the development of basic memory processes—that is, the routine acts of storing and retrieving information. These processes begin in infancy and continue through toddlerhood, but the capacity to remember is limited. By this age, the capacity increases enormously and children are accumulating knowledge—that is, processing information and storing it in memory, both recalled and constructed. When you ask a 6-year-old a complex question, his answer may be partly what he remembers and partly what he is inferring based on what he knows. This kind of recall, referred to as constructive memory, is a good indicator of how well children will remember information.

Earlier in this chapter, you heard Keeley using a memory strategy—repeating her mother’s reminder to herself. At ages 5 to 8, children are able to use sophisticated memory strategies called mnemonics. The most common mnemonic is rehearsal, deliberately repeating over and over. We hear kindergarten children repeating their phone numbers and their addresses—an example of rehearsal. By ages 7 and 8, children use a great deal of rehearsal in their school learning and are ready for more advanced mnemonics. One of us still remembers the rhyme “Thirty days has September, April, June, and November...” and uses it for remembering how many days are in each month.

Significant Achievements in Thinking. One of the most impressive achievements of children of this age is their increasing ability to understand the views or perspectives of others. One welcomed effect of this new ability in their social interactions is they get along better. With this ability to see a situation from two perspectives comes the ability to focus on several aspects of a problem at the same time. These children are also able to reverse their thinking—that is, go through a series of steps and reverse them or realize that one step can undo another. In the next chapter, you will learn about Piaget’s theories related to these achievements in thinking. Piaget explained for us how children’s thinking changes as they mature during this time. Their achievements in thinking are very influential in their abilities to learn math and science in kindergarten and primary grades, so it is important to be aware of their thinking capacities.

Another significant achievement of this age group is concept acquisition. Woolfolk (1995) defines concepts as categories used to group similar events, ideas, objects, or
people, and states that “most of what we know about the world involved concepts and relationships among concepts” (p. 286). What is significant about the achievement of concept acquisition is that children of this age are able to work with abstractions (concepts). Concepts are vague and unlike the concrete learning that preschool children do so well. So, children in kindergarten and primary grades begin to move from physical examples to an understanding of complex concepts, such as numbers and time. Preschoolers often recite numbers and can count from 1 to 10 or more, but it doesn’t mean that they understand what 1 is or what 10 is. By age 6 or 7, children’s understanding of one-to-one correspondence and number is complete, but not until after age 8 are children reasonably accurate in placing events in a time sequence (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Concept acquisition means that children are moving beyond memorization to understanding. Gardner (1993a) says that they then have the capacity to “take knowledge, skills, and concepts and apply them appropriately in new situations” (p. 2). You can now see why we called this section Significant Achievements in Thinking.

Classification—the ability to group objects by common attributes—is another exciting capacity of this age. Children begin this ability by using one attribute, such as color or size, to classify objects and then extend the ability to classify using more than one attribute. For instance, in kindergarten, Matt sorts the blocks by shape, but in first grade, he may sort the large rectangles or the small red triangles, thus combining attributes. While in the primary grades, he may also master seriation, which is the ability to place objects in order of length, weight, or size. One of us observed a kindergarten/first-grade class in Victoria, British Columbia, in which the teacher asked the children to line up by height. Listen to what happened as the children struggled with a challenging task of seriation:

The teacher, Mary, began, “I’ve been observing many of you measuring lately. You’ve been measuring your castles and measuring yourselves on our growth chart. We have an activity today to get you started using measurement. I want to see if you can form a line all together with the smallest child on this end and the tallest child on that end. You can do this any way you want.”

The children immediately began with ideas:

“If you’re not sure, you can stand back to back to measure.”

“Start with the smallest ones.”

“Start with three people and then get two more.”

For the next 10 minutes, three different children tried organizing the children into a line. They succeeded in arranging only four children. Then, one of the kindergarten children, a very petite girl named Sandy, loudly said, “I know what to do.” The group allowed her to take over and she began adding children to the line of four children already arranged. Children followed her directions and stood still in their places. Sandy got lots of coaching from the other children as she estimated the “right spot” for each child, measuring with her hand on heads, and
stepping back to verify her placements for each child. She succeeded in completing the line of children, then placed herself at the end as the shortest child, which she was. Mary clapped her hands with delight, “You did it all by yourselves.” She grabbed a camera and took several pictures, encouraging children to talk about their experiences. Children stepped forward to look at the line of their classmates, and Sandy smiled to herself. (Driscoll, 1995, pp. 198–199)

As you will learn in the next chapter, a great deal of the cognitive development in middle childhood is influenced by children’s social interaction. Both Piaget and Vygotsky (whom you will meet) have theorized about the effects of children learning from other children and from adults. Another great thinker, Jerome Bruner, adds discussion to the notion that others contribute to our individual learning processes, indirectly and directly. After reading more about cognitive development, you will be ready to be reacquainted with Keeley, who is now in kindergarten (Chapter 10), and to meet Jodie, a first-grade student, in Chapter 12. Jodie and her friends will help you understand the wide range of children’s cognitive development in the primary grades. You will also observe their social and emotional development and see some distinctive differences and changes from the preschool children in Felipe’s Head Start class (Chapter 9).

Social Development

This is a time for advances in self-understanding for children of ages 6 through 8 years. These children are able to assess their own personal abilities by making comparisons with peers. They are also able to see themselves in a social context—that is, as a member of a group. You will hear Keeley describing herself as, “I am friendly and nice to my friends.” She refers to herself as a kindergartner. She might also say, “I’m Dani’s friend” or “I’m the best writer in my class.”

GENDER ROLE DEVELOPMENT. In addition to social comparisons and self-evaluation, children in kindergarten and primary grades are continuing their development of gender roles. Parents and other significant adults in children’s lives continue to have a great influence on children’s understanding of gender roles. Keeley insists that “girls can’t play basketball or baseball” because she is surrounded by a group of adult males who play sports. None of the females in her life do so, so she is certain that girls can’t play those sports. For children like Keeley, gender has become a social construct—that is, she is assigning or associating specific behaviors, attitudes, roles, and activities with one sex. Early childhood educators work to eliminate gender role constraints such as Keeley’s assertion about girls and sports, and help each child reach his or her individual potential (Roberts & Hill, 2003, p. 39). Again, children’s literature can provide models that challenge the gender role stereotypes that children are learning from society.

INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION ON CHILDREN’S GENDER ROLE SOCIALIZATION. Children learn about gender roles from multiple sources in addition to the adult models around them—books, songs, movies, and television, for example. Keeping in mind the number of hours that children watch television (30 hours a week for preschoolers), it has a significant influence. We know that television watching influences children’s prosocial and antisocial behaviors as well as their attitudes about race and gender. Studies of television offerings found that two-thirds of characters are male, and women are frequently defined by their relationships with men. Even children’s shows and cartoons depict females less often than males, less active than males, and in fewer lead roles than men. Gender stereotypes have been found in almost every kind of TV programming and in commercials. In sum, much of children’s sense of what it means to be male or female in our society is influenced by television portrayals of males and females and those portrayals are characterized by gender biases and stereotypes (Witt, 2000, p. 324).

IMPORTANCE OF PEERS. Children of this age group begin to play, interact with, and prefer same-sex friends, but demonstrate the beginnings of attraction to the opposite sex.
A great deal of kidding takes place about such topics as kissing and boyfriends and girlfriends. During this time, peer relationships begin to move into importance in competition with the family. Once children are in school all day, it makes sense that peers become so important. Many children spend as many hours with friends as they do with family members. Children learn from other children cooperation, relationships and friendships, and how to work and play in groups. By first and second grade, youngsters develop a sense of “groupness”—a beginning feeling of *we* and a collective identity. One often hears a preschooler or a kindergartner say, “I’m not inviting you to my birthday party.” Social groups are already forming in kindergarten, but by first grade, they are more stable. It is easy to distinguish between those inside and outside the groups. When you watch Jodie in her class (Chapter 12), you will meet some of the children in her group.

**Emotional Development**

We can learn much about a child’s emotional development by watching his or her social interactions. Personality characteristics and dispositions are quite visible when children are working or playing with others. What you also see is how those qualities affect peers and how peers respond to those qualities. Another aspect of a child’s emotional development is reflected by a metaphor about children who are 6 to 8 years of age. They are described as a “commuter traveling back and forth between the outside world and the smaller more personal one of the family” (Chilman, 1966, p. 5). With such a context for their emotional development, it is not surprising to note that middle childhood is a time of emotional extremes. Children can be deliriously happy and excited one minute and miserably sad and morose the next.

**ATTACHMENTS.** This is a confusing time! The 6-, 7-, and 8-year-old wants constant attention and affection from parents and other adults and will regularly display exaggerated dependence. Simultaneously, that same child wants independence from those adults. To make things even more confusing, this child will use fairly negative behaviors to get attention and affection; thus, the interpretation of her development may be opposite of what she is actually communicating. To be specific, a 7-year-old may argue or use shocking language to get her mother to pay attention to her. Elkind (1994) thinks that some of this behavior may also be a kind of rebellion against the inequality of the parent/child relationship.

**FEARS.** The development of new fears and the disappearance of old fears go hand in hand with changes in cognitive development. As children begin to understand things, some fears are released. With new understanding and new information, however, come new fears. Children of this age won’t express fears loudly or with intense emotion like toddlers or preschoolers, but they will exhibit fear responses. Those responses are characterized by anxiety, discomfort, and repression of the fear. You will see these children bite their nails, stop eating or sleeping, become very dependent, and even show signs of illness. Children in middle childhood boast of not being afraid and they become inattentive or distracted when they are afraid. There’s that confusion again between what they really want and what they communicate.

Self-reflection on your own childhood fears will help you understand the many sources and influences on children’s fears. Reflecting on your own experiences is often a way to understand others.

**SELF-CONCEPT.** This is a time of stability of self-concept, and self-concept is greatly influenced by what children believe others think about them. Remember the importance of peers! Children approaching middle childhood are self-critical and they compare themselves with others frequently. They need help in accepting their own feelings and in seeing how those feelings affect their relationships. Adults can provide support for emotional development by engaging in a healthy relationship with the children. If that
relationship is characterized by mutual support, acceptance, empathy, and genuine understanding, the children will also develop those qualities.

During this time, children often engage in organized games and sports, and those activities can have a significant influence on the children’s emotional development, especially self-worth. If those activities are not characterized by acceptance and sensitivity, a child’s sense of self may be damaged. Most of us have observed too many Little League games and ballet recitals that satisfied adults but didn’t respect children. Those experiences bring us to the final aspect of development: physical and motor development.

**Physical and Motor Development**

Children who are ages 5 to 8 advance in motor skills partly because of development and partly because they have many opportunities to use those abilities in games and sports. Think of the complexity of playing soccer, skiing, gymnastics, and so on. Many children of this age are physically ready and very enthusiastic and they develop coordination and complex motor skills. Gallahue (1982) recommends, however, that children should not be pushed into advanced sports activities or formalized participation before they are ready or interested.

In terms of small motor development, dexterity has increased and eye-hand coordination is enhanced. Small motor skills greatly influence school success. Making a variety of writing and drawing tools available to children will enhance their interest in these tasks. Children also need a balance of guided and unguided writing and drawing activities. This is an aspect of development in which you will observe enormous variation among a group of children who are exactly the same age.

The final aspect of physical and motor development to be considered is the perceptual-motor development we discussed during our examination of preschool children. Perceptual-motor abilities are well developed for kindergarten and primary-grade children, and the level of refinement is dependent on the experiential opportunities the children have. Children of this age develop spatial and directional awareness as they participate in games and sports.

**NEED FOR ATTENTION TO PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS.** Physical development and motor abilities are not a priority in many elementary school programs, especially when the children move beyond kindergarten. This is partly due to dwindling resources in education. As an early childhood educator, you may have to become an advocate for children of this age to have opportunities for vigorous physical play. Research has suggested that there is a relationship between the many physical skills of middle childhood and children’s cognitive and social development (Marcon, 2003, p. 86).

There is an even more pressing reason to encourage physical activities with children as the obesity rates in young children rise. Many programs are collaborating with families and medical experts to design curriculum that achieves both better nutrition and improved physical play activity. At least 60 minutes a day is recommended for such play, in safe places both indoors and outdoors, with toys and equipment that encourage physical activity (Sorte & Daeschel, 2006). Emphasis on outdoor play is especially recommended because most outdoor environments for children’s play have become limited, standardized and uninteresting, regulated, and controlled by adults (Sutterby & Frost, 2006). Worries about crime, pollution, effects of the sun, and traffic have eliminated many informal play areas outside. To begin, adults have to value outdoor play so that resources can...
be directed to the creation of safe outdoor play spaces. In addition to planning and providing time and space for physical activities, remember to be a good model. Participate in some of those vigorous activities for your own health as well as to motivate children.

Often, children of this age are expected to sit for long periods of time because they have greater control of their bodies and longer attention spans, but long periods of sitting fatigue these children more than running, jumping, or bicycling does (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Programs and time set aside for physical action are essential in kindergarten and primary grades because children are refining their physical skills and expressing their physical power and control. Remember, too, that those physical activities can enhance self-confidence.

Individual Differences in Kindergarten and Primary Grades

All domains of development—physical, social, cognitive, and emotional—are connected or interrelated. So, when a 6-year-old develops new motor skills, it may result in changes in his social development. Especially during these early school years, development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Too many of the programs for kindergarten and primary grades focus on cognitive development and ultimately defeat the children’s efforts to succeed.

 RESPONDING TO VARIATIONS IN CHILDREN’S EXPERIENCES AND DEVELOPMENT. Because children of this age have accumulated five to six years of varying experiences and have been progressing in their development at very different paces, there is huge diversity among children in kindergarten and primary grades. One response to this issue is the mixed-aged class that you encountered earlier in this chapter. Whether you work in a mixed-aged class, a class of kindergarten-aged children, a first-grade class, or a second-grade class, it’s important to remember that those differences are a primary consideration for all of your decisions. The language of “developmentally appropriate practice” (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) for 6- through 8-year-olds from the National Association for the Education of Young Children states our reminder well:

Teachers have high (challenging but achievable) expectations and standards for every child’s learning and development. To foster children’s self-confidence, persistence, and other positive dispositions as learners, teachers adjust the rate and pace of the curriculum as well as the content so that all children engage in learning experiences in which they can succeed most of the time and yet are challenged to work on the edge of their developing capabilities.

Teachers know each child well. As they plan learning experiences and work with children, they take into account individual differing abilities, developmental levels, and approaches to learning. Responsiveness to individual children is evident in the classroom environment, curriculum and teaching practices. Teachers make sure that every child has opportunities to actively participate and make contributions. (p. 162)

The skill of brachiation (swinging from the arms) is especially challenging for children of this age.
CHAPTER 2

Again, the more you know about and understand young children, the better you will be prepared to make those decisions. Our final topic, dispositions, is another individual aspect of development that will help you appreciate the uniqueness of each child.

Dispositions

As we described very early in this chapter, dispositions are inclinations and preferences. Only recently have teachers talked about dispositions as a consideration for their work with children and families. Dispositions will offer you greater insight to help you broaden that lens with which you view children. Often, a child’s disposition may be his most obvious characteristic—the quality we first encounter. If someone like Adam has the disposition to be curious, his curiosity may be what we notice about him. It may even keep us from noticing other aspects of his development. So, our awareness of the presence of dispositions will help us see a more complete picture of a child.
Defining Dispositions

Before talking about how to use insights about dispositions, it is important to extend your understanding of what dispositions are. Some of the definitions of disposition from psychological literature suggest that it is an internal characteristic and that it is somewhat permanent. Katz and Raths (1985) think that disposition is connected to acts that may be so habitual and automatic that they seem intuitive and spontaneous. For instance, Keeley doesn’t have to think about “taking charge” of her preschool peers—it seems to be intuitive and it definitely looks spontaneous. Others (Perkins, Jay, & Tishman, 1993) define dispositions as “people’s tendencies to put their capabilities into action.” Therefore, Keeley’s “taking charge” in her preschool is a matter of using her ability to lead (her management skills, her social skills, and her creativity).

Finally, Katz and Raths (1985) suggest that dispositions are “patterns of action that require some attention to what is occurring in the context of the action, that is in a particular context and at particular times” (p. 10). Again, if we had observed Keeley over a period of time, we would see that her pattern had developed over time. We would currently see that pattern of “taking charge” occurring at particular time (during free play and center times) and in particular contexts (on the playground and at home with another child). We would see that she scans the room to find children who are not engaged or who will be open to her planning. We would also see that she often “takes charge” when others are having difficulty, so she is paying attention to what is happening and behaving accordingly. Dispositions are clearly an important aspect of who Keeley is and of each child’s individuality.

In addition to attending to children’s disposition, it will be important to notice your own dispositions. Early in Chapter 1, we encouraged you to begin to reflect on your own life experiences so that you could reflect on our stories with self-awareness. Many of us early childhood educators consider the disposition to reflect on your future teaching as important as the knowledge and skills you will need to teach. We suggest that you identify and observe models of such dispositions, those of your peers and other early childhood professionals you encounter, and that you practice the behaviors to the extent that they become your dispositions.

Why Study Dispositions?

A number of psychologists and, more recently, early childhood educators think that dispositions are a critical goal of education, along with knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Their rationale is that without the disposition to do so, a child will not use all the knowledge and skills that we teach. This argument implores us to promote certain dispositions in the way we work with children. If we truly want children to be learners, to be listeners, to be readers, and to be caring individuals, they will need the dispositions to be all these things. Teaching them how to read or how to listen will not be enough. If you agree with the notion that dispositions are essential for learning, then you will need to begin thinking about how to encourage and support dispositions.

Nurturing the Disposition to Be Curious

“At no time in life is curiosity more powerful than in early childhood” (Perry, 2003, p. 26). Most of the children that you will encounter will arrive with curiosity and the desire to explore their world. Your challenge will be to nurture that disposition and not discourage it for the sake of safety, convenience, or conformity. You may be wondering about that statement, so we will provide examples.

• Setting up an environment for infants and toddlers to explore through touch and taste will require you to have daily routines for sterilizing toys and to arrange items on low shelves.
Toddlers will explore with their bodies as they climb, poke, move, drag, or take apart, and the environment will need to be set up to support those behaviors.

For all ages, you will need to provide the security of routines and setting while introducing frequent elements of novelty (Perry, 2003, p. 27). A new vase of flowers on the table, a new photo on the board, a mystery item on display, or an unusual piece of music will add novelty that stimulates curiosity.

Finally, you will need to aware and sensitive to the differences in children’s curiosity. Children’s preferences, interests, and experiences will influence their curiosity and what stimulates it.

Nurturing the Disposition of Caring

Many of us in the early childhood profession are interested in the disposition of caring or being generous or helpful. That interest and commitment comes from concern about our society in general and about children’s development. We know from research that humans are born with the capacity to be caring, and that even very young children demonstrate concern and comforting behaviors when other children are distressed. Research has documented that infants as young as age 10 months respond to another child’s distress with sad looks and crying themselves (Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1984). By children’s second year, they tend to help and comfort other people frequently, but some children are much more inclined to do so than others. By preschool years, children become even more helpful, caring, and generous. If you observe a preschool class, you will likely see some children who are always caring for others and some children who do not seem to notice that others have any needs. For example, it appears to be automatic for Joely to respond whenever anyone else gets hurt or is upset, but we never see Adrian do so.

When caring behaviors are studied, it is clear that there are individual differences in young children’s capacities to care and to demonstrate caring. Research also suggests that a number of factors explain or cause that variation among individuals: biological factors, cultural factors, and socializing effects of family, teachers, peers, and media (Eisenberg, 1992). As with curiosity, you will play an important role in children’s development of the disposition of caring. There are specific ways to encourage children to be caring. Help children to recognize the feelings of others by drawing attention to someone’s feelings, by letting them know that you care about their feelings, and by reminding them of experiences in their lives that are similar to someone else’s experience (Schulman & Mekler, 1985). Provide lots of explanations about feelings. Acknowledge when children demonstrate caring and point out examples of kindness. And finally, remember that you are a powerful model with your caring behaviors whether you are with the children or interacting with another educator.

Teacher’s Role in Children’s Developing Dispositions

As a teacher, you will play a role in children’s developing dispositions. This is not surprising, considering that many children will spend a significant amount of their day in your class or program. You, as a significant adult in their lives, will be a model for various dispositions. You will also be capable of promoting certain dispositions.

*JOURNAL 2.5*  
Pause for a moment and think about the dispositions that you value. You may find them in your closest friends and family members. List them and then ask yourself if these are the dispositions you will want to nurture in young children. After some reflection, you may add a few to the list or take some off the list.
Professional Awareness

The important message we are sending to you is that you will play a key role in developing children’s dispositions. Your example will contribute to their dispositions and the way you guide children’s behavior will promote or discourage certain dispositions. Your first step is awareness. Respond to the reflection we prompted in Journal 2.5 often to maintain that awareness. Notice your behavior with children so that you are aware of your capacity to promote or discourage dispositions. That takes us back to your decision-making role, because you can make the decision to promote certain dispositions and to discourage others, but it will take watchfulness on your part. Begin now by noticing your responses to children, even as you observe them with us. Notice how you feel about the adults in our stories and what you value in their interactions with children.

Principles and Insights:
A Summary and Review of Chapter 2

We hope that the glimpses of children throughout this chapter have prompted enthusiasm for your future professional role. Our intent was to begin the process of understanding young children and their development. As you meet the children in the chapters that follow, they will teach you much more about development and individual differences, and you will learn about how to teach and guide children.

In addition to contributing to your knowledge of children and some beginning skills to use when working with them, we hope we have inspired you. Childhood is a time of wonder. We ask you to celebrate with us—celebrate childhood, child development, and the rich differences each of us brings to this world and to each other.

As promised, we provided only profiles of development for each of the age groups. To show you the whole and complete picture, it would have taken entire books about infant development and preschool development, but we wanted simply to begin your “picture” of each age group. What you can take from our descriptions is the certainty that there is a great deal of change occurring at each age, and those changes influence each domain of development—physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. We have already cautioned you about the individuality of children, so keep in mind that those characteristics we just described may not fit every child. We have another caution to describe for you. It’s at the heart of a current and significant controversy that is drawing attention within the profession you are about to enter.

One of the dominant beliefs in the ECE profession is that knowledge of child development is the source of decisions for teaching and guiding young children. By knowledge of child development, we are referring to an individual child’s development as well as child development in general. Stott and Bowman (1996) call this a “slippery base” for practice. Their concern is twofold. First, knowledge of child development is changing rapidly. Second, there are other rich sources of information that offer guidance to our professional practices. Consider the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, history, and public health as just a few possibilities for concepts and skills with which to work with children and families. If you are studying any of those disciplines in other courses, study them for insights about early childhood education. The complexity of our society, and consequently children and families, demands multiple perspectives for understanding them. In the chapters to come, we will integrate ideas from these disciplines to encourage you to broaden your thinking beyond child development.

The second discussion that is occurring in our profession centers on the concept of child development being both universal and cross-cultural in nature. This notion of cross-cultural development suggests that children’s social, cognitive, physical, emotional, and language development are culturally influenced and constructed in important ways. We just described in this chapter characteristics of children at different ages that were culture free. Many of those characteristics would have looked or have been interpreted differently in some cultures. Cross-cultural child development takes into account not only the lives of children and the course of their development but also the lives of adults and the cultural and
societal contexts in which those children and adults interact (New, 1994). An example of that wide lens for looking at children comes with our description of Keeley, the only child of a single working mom, who is being raised with an extended family of adults (Chapter 10). In Chapter 9, you will meet Felipe, one of three children in a Hispanic family that lives in a community in which the majority of residents speak Spanish. Our intent is to encourage you to see children in those cultural and societal contexts in which they are developing. If you truly become an observer (watching and listening) of children, you will begin to comprehend each child’s ethnic and family characteristics and background.

You will need to accompany your sharp eyes and ears with basic knowledge of ethnic characteristics and individual family culture as a framework for your observations and questions. With broad perspectives of multiple disciplines and cross-cultural child development insights, you will be ready to make the decisions of an early childhood educator. You will truly be able to notice individual differences and accommodate those differences in the environment you provide, the activities you plan, and the interactions you have with children and families.

**Becoming an Early Childhood Professional**

This chapter is about child development and dispositions, which is a broad topic. There are volumes and volumes of research, theory, and information on child development. For your professional development, we have selected just a few resources and experiences so that you won’t feel overwhelmed.

**Your Professional Portfolio**

1. Visit a toy store and make a list of toys suitable for an infant, a toddler, a preschooler, and a child in kindergarten or primary grades. For each of your choices, give a developmental rationale (a reason based on developmental characteristics).
2. Another item for your portfolio is a set of goals directed to building a solid foundation to your understanding of child development.

**Your Professional Library**


**Your E-Resources**

**Companion Website**

To access chapter objectives, practice tests, essay questions, and weblinks, visit the companion website at www.ablongman.com.authoredition.
“Designing Developmentally Appropriate Days”

In this video, the narrator discusses developmentally appropriate practices.

Go to Allyn & Bacon’s MyLabSchool (www.mylabschool.com). After logging in, enter Assignment ID ECV1 into the Assignment Finder and watch the video entitled “Designing Developmentally Appropriate Days.”

- As you watch the video, identify the reasons why it is important for teachers and caregivers to have knowledge of the developmental patterns of each child in their care.

MyLabSchool supports you in this course, your licensure exams, and your teaching career. You have access to video footage of real-life classroom scenarios, an extensive Case Study archive, Allyn & Bacon’s Lesson Plan & Portfolio Builder, Research Navigator (which includes EBSCO’s ContentSelect Academic Journal Database, New York Times Search by Subject Archive, and “Best of the Web” Link Library), and a Career Center with resources for PRAXIS exams and licensure preparation, professional portfolio development, job search, and interview techniques.
Theories of Development
Foundations for Practice
When you finish reading and reflecting on this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Define four areas of early childhood development: cognitive, language, social, and emotional.
2. Describe the major contributions associated with each developmental theorist.
3. Create an activity that supports growth in each developmental area.
4. Identify theories in action while you observe a preschool in the chapter.

Why Study Theories of Development?

Keith, the teacher in the preschool you just visited, bases his curriculum planning, activities, and interactions with the children on his interpretations of theories of development. Early childhood professionals look to these theories as a foundation for their own belief systems and personal philosophies of early childhood education. These beliefs and philosophies are then translated into practice, resulting in the environment and interactions created for young children.

Theories come from many different disciplines of knowledge. As mentioned earlier, psychology, anthropology, sociology, physical development, health, linguistics, history, and education provide a knowledge base for planning programs for young children. Theorists and scientists in each of these fields contributed their work and findings.
theories are analyzed and compiled into the growing body of knowledge about young children and their development.

From this knowledge base, early childhood professionals make numerous decisions about children and the type of environment that will nurture young children. For example, you might plan an activity in which young children have frequent opportunities to explore through music, art, books, tapes, manipulative activities, and talking and listening experiences. You would be including learning situations drawn from the theory of multiple intelligences, as discussed by Howard Gardner. Planning an experience where toddlers engage in guided verbal interactions around their activity facilitates their language development and supports the work of Lev Vygotsky, with his emphasis on spoken language.

This chapter describes major theorists from each developmental area. We selected these theorists based on their influence in their respective fields and in early childhood education. As you continue your study of child development, you will note that some theories may conflict with each other, as if saying the opposite about children. You may also notice that even the most respected theorists are criticized or ignored at times. Time spent learning from major theorists will assist you in clarifying the rationale for expectations for early childhood programs. An understanding of these theories will help you develop your own personal philosophy of what works best (and why) for the children in your care.

Integration of Developmental Theories

Observing young children at play, you will see that cognitive, language, social, and emotional development are integrated throughout their activities. Seldom do children use only one developmental area in isolation. For instance, 4-year-old Marc is busy at the dress-up center, talking to himself about putting his arms into a large coat. He is wearing a firefighter’s jacket and hat and tells Samantha, “Let’s hurry and put out the fire at the store. We need to find a hose fast!” Samantha finds her raincoat and hops on a wooden truck with Marc. Off they go to put out the fire, which is actually the climbing structure outside. Their conversation continues about the fire and looking for a hose (a jump rope).

During this interaction, Marc was sharing his thoughts about the fire, looking around to see who might help put out the fire, and focusing on the task at hand. Although this might be described primarily as a social activity, there were many areas of development interwoven in the activity. Marc used language to describe the fire and the equipment needed to put out the fire, including self-talk. He was thinking about the organization and tools needed for fire fighting. At the same time, Marc worked cooperatively with Samantha, and certainly appeared to be enjoying this activity. Each of these behaviors might be classified separately as language development, cognitive development, social development, and emotional development. They were all integrated throughout Marc’s activity of fire fighting. When we present the theories that follow, they may appear isolated as you examine one set of ideas, but the major intent is for you to learn how these theories can be applied coherently in your work with young children.

Before you take your next trip to observe in a preschool, you will examine the developmental areas within cognitive, language, social, and emotional domains. Highlights of major contributors to the different developmental fields will first be discussed and then presented in a preschool setting.

Cognitive and Language Development

Cognitive development refers to the process of developing thinking and reasoning skills as children acquire language skills. This process results in changes in thinking that become increasingly complex (Woolfolk, 2007). Language development requires an un-
derstanding of words (meaning) and the structure of word groups (creating sentences), and is a tool for thinking. Cognitive development and language development are closely connected. Early childhood is a time of exploding use of language, both receptive language (what children hear) and expressive language (what children say). When a toddler begins to talk and express herself through words and phrases, new words seem to be added to her vocabulary each day.

Language shapes our thoughts and thinking. Jerome Bruner finds language and cognition to be intertwined, as did Lev Vygotsky, who saw language as “a logical and analytical tool in thinking” (Vygotsky, 1962). As an early childhood professional, you will want to know how children develop in these two areas and how you can support their development. Many early childhood educators agree that the work of Jean Piaget has greatly influenced the current thinking in child development and early childhood education, perhaps more so than any other theorist. Let’s start with his work as you explore theories of development.

Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget’s (1896–1980) background was in biology and intelligence testing. He worked at Alfred Binet’s experimental laboratory, where the first intelligence test was developed. While conducting intelligence tests with young children, Piaget became interested in the children’s responses, particularly the wrong answers (Crain, 1980). The pattern of incorrect responses seemed to correlate with the age of a child, which led to Piaget’s hypothesis that young children think in an entirely different way than older children and adults (Ginsburg & Opper, 1988). Piaget became interested in the child’s view of environment and began to test his own three children to confirm his hypotheses about levels or stages of development. For example, Piaget believed that children younger than age 7 would not believe that a vertical stack of five books were the same as five books spread out over the rug area. Changing the layout of the books seemed also to change the number of books (physical property), according to children who have not yet reached an advanced stage of thinking. This concept, called conservation, is considered by Piaget as evidence of higher-level thinking.

Through his research, Piaget found that people’s needs for creating order in their lives is a central drive (Piaget, 1952). He called this the drive for equilibrium, or a state of balance. To reach equilibrium, people have biological tendencies to organize and adapt.

TENDENCY TOWARD ORGANIZATION. Piaget proposed that each person is born with the ability to organize her thinking processes into structures and that the tendency to adapt to the environment is inherited. For example, organization allows you to represent your thinking into categories in order to make sense of your world. It would be impossible to deal with every encounter or object as an entirely new experience without drawing on your prior knowledge, which you previously categorized according to certain characteristics.

Let’s say you are observing a 5-year-old at the zoo. Earlier, this child had been watching the bears; he has now moved on to the lion area. He keeps talking about the four-legged animals at the zoo. His experience has helped him organize these animals as four-legged creatures. Next, he encounters the parrots. Seeing only two legs, he asks you where the other two legs are. His organization of animals was built on the structure that the animals have four legs, so this new experience (the parrots) does not fit his organization, until he learns that parrots are classified as birds and have two legs. Thus, the child expands his thinking, but still uses his organization system based on the number of legs.

The structure or organizational system discussed here is called a schema (or scheme) and represents the way a person thinks about the world. An example of a simple schema would be when all flowers that are red are grouped into one category. A more complex schema would be built around the classification of flowers according to plant families. A
schema assists you in organizing your thinking and provides a foundation or framework for future experiences.

**TENDENCY TOWARD ADAPTATION.** Adaptation refers to the way people adjust to their environment. As a biologist, Piaget brought ideas from the science world to educators. His thinking about adaptation prompted a look at the relationship humans have with their environment. Ongoing interactions with the environment constantly change people, as they change the environment. For example, when an infant tries to touch an object that is out of reach, she must adapt by moving toward the object or fussing until someone helps her. When she moves toward the object, she is adapting to the environment by changing her location. New experiences are added to the infant’s repertoire and her organization schema. Adaptation becomes more refined and complex as she gains knowledge and skills.

Piaget’s research on children’s thinking led to his theory based on four stages of cognitive development, as shown in Table 3.1. He proposed that all children proceed sequentially through each of the stages of development, although at individual rates. Cognitive development is an active construction process, created by each child according to her experiences (Crain, 1980).

**SENSORIMOTOR STAGE.** The first stage, sensorimotor, includes children from birth to 2 years of age. Infants interact primarily with their immediate environment and learn through sensory actions, such as hearing, grasping, tasting, or seeing. Objects are real only when they are in sight or touched by the infant. During the first months of life, an infant has not yet developed the ability to mentally represent an object by thinking about it; the object must be present and be seen, touched, smelled, heard, or tasted in order to be “thought of” by the infant.

### TABLE 3.1 Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE AGE</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensorimotor</td>
<td>0–2 years</td>
<td>Begins to make use of imitation, memory, and thought.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Begins to recognize that objects do not cease to exist when they are hidden.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moves from reflex actions to goal-directed activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preoperational</td>
<td>2–7 years</td>
<td>Gradually develops use of language and ability to think in symbolic form.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Able to think operations through logically in one direction.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has difficulties seeing another person’s point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete operational</td>
<td>7–11 years</td>
<td>Able to solve concrete (hands-on) problems in logical fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understands laws of conservation and is able to classify and seriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understands reversibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal operational</td>
<td>11–15 years</td>
<td>Able to solve abstract problems in logical fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Becomes more scientific in thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develops concerns about social issues, identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from B. Wadsworth, Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive and Affective Development: Foundations of Constructivism, 5/e © 1996. Published by Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA. Copyright © 2004 by Pearson Education. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.*
By the end of the sensorimotor stage, the child gradually begins to think of objects and processes as she moves into using prior knowledge and experiences to solve new situations. An example can be found in the following situation: An 18-month-old infant sitting in her high chair is picking up different crackers from the tray and placing them in her mouth, one by one. Whenever she picks up a goldfish-shaped cheese cracker, she chews it and then swallows. The round crackers, however, are spit back out onto the tray. After a few minutes of trial and error with the crackers, the toddler begins to throw the round crackers onto the floor and eat the goldfish-shaped crackers, without needing to taste them first. She learned to discriminate between the two types of crackers and eventually used her prior knowledge to discard the crackers she did not like.

**PREOPERATIONAL STAGE.** During the second stage of cognitive development, Piaget proposed that children from 2 to 6 or 7 years of age are at the preoperational level, where children have gained the ability and skills to represent images and objects without the object actually present. In other words, children at this stage will use objects during their play as symbols to represent objects not available. A 3-year-old might find a Frisbee outside on the playground and offer friends a piece of pizza, while another playmate might be sitting on a log and yelling, “Giddy-up horsee!” These children are involved in symbolic representation—using language to name their symbolic representations and inventing their own symbolic meaning for the object at hand.

Other aspects of the preoperational stage include the development of beginning reasoning and egocentrism (the world revolves around one’s self). Reasoning at this stage tends to be based on actual experiences and may not reflect logical rationale. For instance, Jason, a 4-year-old child, encounters a puddle of water near the sink in the playroom. Since it is raining outside, with puddles forming on the sidewalk, he decides that it must also have rained on this floor. Jason’s reasoning is derived from his experience of walking in the puddle outside and watching the rain form puddles on the sidewalk. He transferred this outdoor experience to inside, when he determined the cause for the puddle on the floor.

Egocentrism could also be reflected in this related example. If another child told Jason that the water in the room came from spilling a glass of water, and Jason did not see anyone spill water, he might decide to hold on to his prior reasoning and explain the puddle from his own point of view. Children at the preoperational stage are not yet able to understand other people’s viewpoints. This does not mean that the young child is selfish or self-centered, but rather that the child is firmly grounded in his own perspective, as this is what makes sense. Understanding that the child is relating to his personal perspective and experiences helps teachers and caregivers realize that explaining in length...
about sharing toys may not be as fruitful as short discussions and demonstrations of guidelines for sharing.

As the child progresses through the preoperational stage, he also becomes more decentered (and less egocentered), meaning he is able to look farther and farther beyond his own perspective. You might observe some 6-year-olds playing with younger children and talking to these children in shorter sentences, emphasizing certain words to help younger children understand. This is an example of decentering—that is, understanding the other person’s perspective and acting on it.

**CONCRETE OPERATIONS STAGE.** From ages 6 to 12, the child enters the period of concrete operations. This stage is characterized by the child gaining the skills and concepts to understand conservation, reversibility, classification, seriation, and the ability to understand someone else’s viewpoint. Conservation occurs when the physical elements of an object change, yet the object conserves most of its original property. A common example of conservation is found in holding up two identical balls of clay in front of a child. When you ask the child if these balls have the same amount of clay, he responds, “Yes.” You then flatten one ball of clay and repeat the question. Typically, the child will decide that the flattened ball of clay is larger because it spreads out over a larger area. Thus, the shape of one of the identical balls of clay changed, but, until he grasps the concept of conservation, the child thinks of them as different amounts.

Reversibility is found in the logic that what is done with objects can also be undone or reversed. Reversibility can be represented with beginning addition. A 7-year-old child who understands reversibility would be able to show the relationship between 2 + 4 and 4 + 2 with blocks and discuss how they add up to the same amount. This same concept would also be introduced in subtraction, where children find that the 6 – 4 uses the same amount of blocks as 4 + 2 and that one equation “undoes” the other.

Classification begins with grouping objects according to one specific characteristic and then expands into a more complicated rationale for classifying. Young children often enjoy sorting like items into separate containers, which provides a structure for their beginning concepts of classification. Objects can be sorted according to shape, color, size, or use. This first step of organization helps children make sense of their world and promotes the understanding of connections and relationships. As children progress through this stage, they are able to increase the difficulty of their classification systems and use their own rationale for the classifications.

When objects are arranged in a sequential order based on one characteristic—such as age, length, or dates—we call this seriation. Our number system is a serial system, as it occurs in a specific order representing increasingly larger amounts. A group of 6- and 7-year-olds might make a chart that lists the months of the year according to their birth months, starting with the month with the most birthdays and moving in sequence to the month with the least number of birthdays. The chart represents seriation, with the months arranged according to the organizational schema of the number of birthdays per month.

Another change that occurs during the concrete operational stage is the child’s beginning understanding of other people’s perspectives. Children can now participate in a discussion about their favorite ice cream flavors and recognize that other people might have an opinion (or favorite flavor) that differs from their perspective. This is a wonderful age at which to discuss cultures and express appreciation for diversity in our world.

**FORMAL OPERATIONS STAGE.** The fourth and final stage of development, according to Piaget, occurs from age 12 through adulthood and is called formal operations, where people are dealing with abstract ideas, concepts, and issues. Much of the foundation for this stage was built throughout the prior three stages and is now expanded through the use of formal operations. Hypothetical situations and questions help older children sort their world and solve new problems that move beyond concrete thinking. The examination and exploration of important issues and concepts are teaching strategies that assist adolescents as they construct their attitudes and beliefs.
APPLYING PIAGET’S THEORY. If you incorporate Piaget’s ideas when you set up your early childhood setting, you would include numerous opportunities for children to explore objects and their environment. When presenting the concept of big and little with a class of 3-year-olds, for example, you would make sure there were many concrete experiences available, such as objects, roleplaying, and pictures. Children learn from exploring their environment and from engaging in activities that allow them to make sense of their world. Simply telling a child what is big and what is little would produce very different learning. A learning environment where children are actively involved with materials helps them feel, see, draw, and categorize objects that are big or little. The involvement with materials is congruent with Piaget’s belief that children learn through interacting with their environment.

Activities would also be designed to enhance the current cognitive development stage of the child. When a child is at the preoperational level, you would encourage her use of objects as symbols for objects that might not be available. For example, two children making a “pretend” breakfast on the play stove talk about the hot stove and remind each other not to touch the pan. They are using the play stove and pans as symbols of a real stove and cooking, and are engaging in language and activities built on symbolism.

Symbolic play is critical to learning, and activities should reflect the children’s interests and developmental levels. When you listen to children at play and observe their approaches to problem solving, you are observing important information that helps you determine their current stage of development. This knowledge helps you plan a variety of activities that correspond to this level. While you watch students, you also realize that within a group of children of the same age, there will be differences among their levels of development. Planning developmentally appropriate activities for small groups and individuals shows your awareness of meeting the individual learning needs of each young child. You will visit a preschool later in this chapter and see how one early childhood educator applies Piaget’s theories in his classroom.

PIAGET’S CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS. Piaget’s theories about children and their thinking and development shifted educators’ emphases on what children already know to examining how children come to know or learn. This shift greatly affected early childhood settings and interactions with children. The belief that acquisition of knowledge and true understanding in learning could be enhanced through activities and experiences had an impact on the curriculum of early childhood programs.

Piaget’s ideas produced a schema or organizational structure of developmental levels useful for thinking about cognitive development of children. His work also challenged educators and psychologists to examine the origins of children’s knowledge. Prior to Piaget’s theories of cognitive development, much of the emphasis in early childhood learning had been based on what children already knew and building programs around their current knowledge. Piaget opened the way to explore how children come to learn new knowledge, which translates into providing activities and an environment that supports growth corresponding to the developmental levels.

Several limitations to Piaget’s work have arisen recently. New research finds that infants exhibit behaviors earlier than Piaget established in his work. After all, Piaget did not have access to sophisticated experimental techniques that researchers now use to determine ages when cognitive stages are reached (Flavell, Miller, & Miller, 1993). Other researchers have suggested that Piaget underestimated young children’s cognitive abilities. Work by Miller and Gelman (1983) found that preschool children are able to demonstrate they understand much more about numbers than was previously thought by Piaget. By reducing the amount of objects the children worked with and simplifying the directions, children were able to display that the number (amount) of objects stayed the same, whether the objects were spaced close together or moved apart from each other.

Important applications of Piaget’s theory led to the acceptance of discovery learning, which is the role of play in early childhood, and to an increased awareness of the individual nature of learning and development. Piaget’s work also laid the foundation for other cognitive developmental theories, such as the work of Jerome Bruner.
**Bruner’s Theory of Cognitive Development**

In his early work, psychologist Jerome Bruner (born in 1915) studied perception (1951) and thinking (Bruner, Goodnow, & Austin, 1956). His research in these areas led him to propose that children learn as they seek meaning and make discoveries. As Bruner continued his study of cognitive development, he identified three stages of cognitive growth: the enactive, iconic, and symbolic stages (1966, 1971). These stages are outlined in Table 3.2.

**ENACTIVE STAGE.** During the enactive stage, the infant comprehends his world through actions, similar to the sensorimotor stage in Piaget’s developmental levels. The infant responds to actions and objects through touch, taste, feel, smell, and sound.

**ICONIC STAGE.** When the child moves into the iconic stage (approximately 18 months to 6 years of age), he now views the world in concrete images. Whatever he sees must be true and real. A scary puppet looks real to a child in this stage.

**SYMBOLIC STAGE.** The final stage is the symbolic stage, where the child is able to draw from abstractions, language, and thinking to construct his world. He uses his knowledge gained through actions and images, but is able to move to higher levels of thinking and understand abstract ideas and concepts. You might notice this in a primary-level classroom, where children begin to read, write, and tell stories and remind each other what is real and what is “make believe.” In their own imaginations, they are able to relate abstract ideas and share them with others.

**DISCOVERY LEARNING AND INDUCTIVE REASONING.** Bruner emphasized discovery learning and inductive reasoning as important instructional approaches for young children throughout all three stages of cognitive development. In Bruner’s model of discovery learning, the child is an active player in discovering key principles of knowledge through her interaction with examples, materials, and/or problems. For example, a teacher or caregiver presents examples of pennies and other coins to a 5-year-old child. The child works with the coins, making connections and drawing her own meaning from the materials. She sorts the coins into different piles, discovering from another child the name of the brownish coins. She makes the generalization that all brownish coins are called pennies and the other coins are not pennies. When involved in discovery learning, the child builds her own structures and organizes her knowledge instead of passively accepting the teacher’s reasoning or answers (Bruner, 1966, 1971).

If 5-year-old Antonio wants to find out what will float on water, the role of the teacher is to assist Antonio in gathering materials needed to test his hypothesis. He might also want assistance in designing an experiment that will help him discover if rocks, pencils, sticks, or a cookie will float. Antonio is actively exploring and experimenting to find answers to his question.

The teacher wants Antonio to discover the principle of gravity, weight, and buoyancy on his own, so she stops by to ask him about his findings. Through inductive reasoning,

<p>| TABLE 3.2 Bruner’s Three Stages of Cognitive Development |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>APPROXIMATE AGE</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enactive</td>
<td>0–1½ years</td>
<td>Knows his or her world through senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iconic</td>
<td>1½–6 years</td>
<td>Knows his or her world through concrete images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>6+ years</td>
<td>Knows his or her world through abstractions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
or drawing from specific examples to develop his own more general principles, Antonio talks about the heavy objects dropping to the bottom right away and the wood things staying on top of the water. Before he places a penny into the water, his teacher asks him to guess, or hypothesize, what will happen: “Will the penny float or sink?” She is encouraging Antonio to use his intuition based on his research, to think intuitively about the next step of his experiment, and to predict outcomes.

**APPLYING BRUNER’S THEORY.** An environment that reflects Bruner’s ideas finds children actively pursuing their interests and testing ideas to find answers and solutions. The teacher or caregiver asks questions that require investigations and hands-on learning by the children. You see lots of equipment and materials available for children to use in a variety of ways. For example, Antonio used a small tub to test his floating theory. Later in the morning, Samantha was curious about the blocks in the play area and started drawing their shapes. She used the same tub to sort a box of blocks into two piles, one that contains shapes with four sides and one for shapes with more or less than four sides.

In an environment that supports Bruner’s theory of learning, children expect to come up with their own answers and to share answers with others. They also expect to make mistakes, as they predict outcomes of their experiments based on their initial investigations and incomplete evidence. As an adult in this setting, you would ask many questions. Many of these questions will be **open ended**, with several possible answers. You would also expect the children to come up with ways to test their ideas and then connect their new learning with previous experiences.

Now we’ll look at Vygotsky’s work, which strongly supports the theory that children construct language and meaning from experiences with language through social interactions. Vygotsky stressed the importance of children’s interactions with their environment to promote learning, as did Piaget and Bruner.

**Vygotsky’s Theory of Language Development**

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) was a Russian psychologist whose contributions to early childhood study were in the field of the sociocultural aspects of learning. His work was based on the idea that society and culture influence what and how children learn (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). According to Vygotsky, human behavior must be studied within the social and historical context of the child (Dixon-Krauss, 1995). Teachers and caregivers need to include the social and cultural backgrounds of children when making educational decisions.
As a caregiver or teacher, it is important to move beyond your own culture and background and become knowledgeable of other cultures of the children with whom you work. For example, some Native American children may have been taught at home to support others, even if there are personal costs for doing so. A Native American child in your care might not volunteer to give a correct answer if this made others in the group look as if they do not know as much. Awareness of cultural influences will help you in your interactions with children and their families and in your planning for learning activities (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). Box 3.1 presents a brief summary of a study that examined the influence of cultural context on a child’s development.

Vygotsky presented the theory that children learn through their interactions with others, thus the people in their world hold great influence on their learning. Language is a cultural tool, reflecting the child's physical and social environments (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). The use of language is critical for cognitive development. Children begin to develop higher levels of thinking when expressing their thoughts and ideas.

Older children and adults play a key role in the cognitive development of a child, often guiding the child to move to more complex ideas, concepts, or skills. When a child is working with others near the limits of her ability, support and guidance from others can help the child solve a new problem. This is called learning in the zone of proximal development.

**THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT.** In his theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), Vygotsky believed that an educator could assist young children in moving to higher levels in their development by encouraging involvement in activities that are slightly more difficult than those the child can master alone (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). By working with capable peers or with adults who support them, children

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**BOX 3.1 A CLOSER LOOK**

**Does Cultural Context Influence Child Development?**

If you were to observe a toddler in her home in San Pedro, Guatemala, and another toddler of the same age in Salt Lake City, Utah, you would note similarities and differences in their activities, behaviors, and development. “Each culture has its own system of norms and values in which the development and interactions of the children evolve” (Rogoff et al., 1993, p. 162). Rogoff and colleagues studied toddlers and their interactions with caregivers in four different cultural communities. Two of these communities included Salt Lake City and San Pedro. In this study, the researchers were attempting “to understand development in the context of children’s everyday activities and culturally valued goals of development” (p. 9).

Expectations of the children led to variations in their development from culture to culture. For example, in San Pedro, where it is expected that young children will assist with household chores, 3 of the 14 toddlers helped their family by running errands, such as purchasing bread at a nearby store. None of the toddlers in Salt Lake City assumed such responsibility. In Salt Lake City, 10 of the 14 mothers of toddlers reported that they had instructed their child in walking or talking, whereas only 2 of the San Pedro mothers reported that they taught these skills. The mothers of the 14 toddlers in San Pedro indicated that their children learned to walk and talk by observing others or with parental encouragement.

Keller (2003) has compared behaviors ranging from breastfeeding to eye contact between parents and children in rural Cameroonian Nso and urban German middle-class families. Nso practices in Cameroon prioritized harmonious family relationships and obligation to the family system, whereas urban German practices prioritized independence and uniqueness. Keller suggests that such differences derive from different “cultural models” of infancy and child development. Thus, reaching developmental milestones seems to be related to the values and expectations expressed by the child’s cultural community, where beliefs might prioritize independence or collectivism, observation or instruction, or other values important to a cultural group.
successfully complete more complicated activities and thus work at the level of potential development (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD theory is most often applicable to cognitive development, although it is certainly connected to language development. For example, when 2-year-old Kara wanted more apple, she said, “More.” Her older brother replied, “You want more apple?” and Kara answered, “More apple.” Through this shared interaction, Kara put two words together to make a phrase that communicated her request. Her brother’s assistance to help her move beyond her current level of language use to a more complex level expanded her development, showing that Kara was in a zone of proximal development. Vygotsky finds language to be a foundation for higher cognitive processes (Berk, 2006).

JOURNAL 3.1  What is the difference between Kara’s language experience with her older brother, compared to an adult correcting Kara’s language by telling her, “No, you mean ‘More apple’”?  

Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) studied Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development and used the term scaffolding to describe the assistance provided by the expert that helps the child move to a higher level of learning. The task itself is not changed, but the level or amount of assistance is gradually decreased until the child is able to perform the task independently. Bruner (1985b) finds the scaffolding provided by the expert (e.g., teacher, caregiver, or older child) to be important to the learning process. The scaffold provides a stable structure that enables a child to try out new knowledge with assistance, with the supports gradually decreased as the child becomes more capable. Scaffolding takes the form of directions, cues, modeling, or demonstrating, as well as many other learning guides. A young child learning to repeat a favorite nursery rhyme starts saying a few words along with his caregiver. After repeating the rhyme, he begins to say more and more words independently, while his caregiver leaves pauses in the rhyme to allow the child to “fill in the blanks.” This is an example of scaffolding, where the support is gradually withdrawn as the child becomes more independent with his task.

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE. A second major contribution attributed to Vygotsky is the emphasis on expressive language as a child interacts with her environment. Children use the tool of language to master themselves and gain independence of behavior and thought (Vygotsky, 1986). If you listen to young children at play, you often hear them talking to themselves, whether explaining what will happen in their play or directing their own actions. According to Vygotsky, young children use their self-talk (private speech) for self-guidance and self-direction. We all use self-talk; in fact, as I am sitting at the computer, I often read sentences out loud to check for comprehension.

Language development and cognitive ability are affected by interactions children have with others. Infants begin responding to language at birth, and by 3 or 4 months of age, they will smile or turn toward the sound of a familiar voice. The interaction with the environment has a profound impact on language development, as children connect words to concrete objects and activities and form a framework for their thinking and communicating. Table 3.3 highlights the language development of young children.

APPLYING VYGOTSKY’S THEORY. A classroom or environment set up around Vygotskian thinking would find the adult planning activities around guided or assisted discovery. Both Piaget and Vygotsky support discovery learning. The major difference is Vygotsky’s incorporation of guided learning; that is, an adult or older child assists the child in the learning process. Piaget would have suggested that children learn through their individual interactions with the environment, choosing not to emphasize the roles of others as having an impact on learning, as Vygotsky proposed.

Language plays an active role in guided discovery, with the adult talking about the activity, asking questions, and encouraging the child to describe what he is doing throughout the activity. A rich context for language development includes time for reading,
storytelling, sharing and discussions, and, when developmentally appropriate, introducing written symbols of language. There would also be opportunities to interact and become involved in cooperative learning experiences. The voices of many children would be heard as they talked about their interactions and explained their activities to themselves, each other, and adults.

The teacher or caregiver would also be aware of each child’s zone of proximal development and provide activities to engage the child in an activity that required assistance (scaffolding) from a peer or adult. To meet the children’s learning needs, small group activities would be arranged according to the children’s current level of development and their zone of proximal development.

Both cognitive development and language development have an impact on children’s social and emotional development. Children need emotionally healthy lives in order to fully develop their cognitive and language skills. They also need frequent opportunities to interact with others as they grow socially. Let’s turn our attention to social and emotional development and how you can support a young child’s development in these areas.

**Social and Emotional Development**

Social and emotional development are at the heart of effective early childhood programs. Early childhood professionals acknowledge the importance of creating an environment that truly supports and encourages healthy social and emotional growth. **Social development** of a child reflects the standards and values of her family and of her society, where the child begins to learn acceptable or appropriate behaviors at birth and continues to learn behavior patterns through her relationships with others, adapting these behaviors to her unique personality (Browne & Gordon, 2008). These behaviors are established by the society within which the child lives and become the social expectations that guide social development and the child’s interactions with others. **Emotions** are feelings, some of

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**TABLE 3.3 Development of Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE IN MONTHS</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS OF VOCALIZATION AND LANGUAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Coos and chuckles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–9</td>
<td>Babbles; duplicates common sounds; produces sounds such as “ma” or “da”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–18</td>
<td>A small number of words; follows simple commands and responds to no; uses expressive jargon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–21</td>
<td>Vocabulary grows from about 20 words at 18 months to about 200 words at 21; points to many more objects; comprehends simple questions; forms 2-word phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24–27</td>
<td>Vocabulary of 200 to 400 words; has 2- or 3-word phrases; uses prepositions and pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–33</td>
<td>Fastest increase in vocabulary; 3- to 4-word sentences are common; word order, phrase structure, and grammatical agreement approximate the language of surroundings, but many utterances are unlike anything an adult would say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36–39</td>
<td>Vocabulary of 1,000 words or more; well-formed sentences using complex grammatical rules, although certain rules have not yet been fully mastered; grammatical mistakes are much less frequent; about 90 percent comprehensible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

which are complex. At some time in your life, you have felt anger, fear, pride, satisfaction, sorrow, frustration, joy, confidence, hate, or love. Even as an adult, perhaps you have found it difficult to communicate some of these feelings. Young children’s feelings grow out of their interaction with their environment and their responses to these interactions. Early childhood is the time when children learn to notice, accept, and express their feelings as they develop emotionally. The child is forming a sense of self.

The foundation for healthy social and emotional growth is established in a child’s early years. As an early childhood professional, you have a great responsibility to understand theories of social and emotional development and to be able to translate these theories into sound practice. Many social and emotional behaviors are learned through responses to an individual’s behavior, observations of adult or peer behaviors, trying out different roles through play, and opportunities for social interaction. The term socialization describes the process of learning which behaviors are appropriate for specific situations. Let’s learn more about social development through Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development.

**Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development**

Erik Erikson (1902–1994) is considered to be a psychosocialist, one who believes that how individuals respond to the demands of society at different stages of life affects development and acquisition of skills and abilities to become contributing members of society (Berk, 2006). Erikson focused his attention on children’s behavior. According to him, interpersonal relationships reveal the core of a person’s makeup or personality (Maier, 1978). Based on specific behaviors, Erikson placed a child at a certain stage or level of development according to the description of that level and the match between the child’s behavior and the level of development. Erikson’s theory of human development is based on the concept that individuals move through development stages as they face problems or crises throughout their lives. When a person successfully solves conflict at earlier stages, then the person moves to the next life stage, as seen in Table 3.4. Achievement at each stage is dependent on learning and development at prior levels.

**TRUST VERSUS MISTRUST.** In the first stage of psychosocial development, trust versus mistrust, an infant is dependent on adults to meet all of her needs. When an adult responds to the cries or discomfort of the infant in a consistent manner, the infant develops trust for the world around her. Infants need consistent care provided by warm, responsive adults who attend to the infant when she is uncomfortable or in need, as
well as times when she may want company or interaction with others. When the infant learns that she can depend on others for predictable care, she will then be able to develop trust. At this point, she has resolved the conflict of discomfort by trusting that an adult will help her. At approximately 12 to 18 months of age, she will then move into the second stage.

**AUTONOMY VERSUS DOUBT AND SHAME.** During the autonomy versus doubt and shame stage, children are generally from 18 months to 3 years of age, and are now testing their independence by assuming more self-responsibilities. This is a busy time, when toddlers explore a rapidly expanding world as they begin to walk and talk. They are also learning to dress and feed themselves, and begin toileting skills. Children at this age are also finding out what they like and do not like, and will clearly let others know their opinions, even as those opinions change frequently throughout the day.

Erikson believes that adults must provide guidance through support for the child’s efforts at independence. If not, the child begins to doubt her own ability to master important tasks and skills, which would lead to lower self-confidence and self-esteem and result in shame and doubt. The role of the adult is critical in supporting and supervising this new independence, and in helping the child feel responsible and capable.

**INITIATIVE VERSUS GUILT.** From 3 to 6 years of age, the young child is in the initiative versus guilt stage and is ready to take initiative in planning some actions. He is interested in developing an idea and seeing it take place. Adults can encourage this curiosity and desire to take charge and help channel these activities into positive experiences. Erikson points out that if the child continually finds his actions result in “unhappy” events, he will develop guilt feelings.

Nurturing the child’s independence and listening to his plans help the adult head off major problems and guide the child to successful ventures. For instance, a 5-year-old brings his favorite book to day care and wants to take it to the sandbox outside. Because of rain earlier in the day, the sand is wet. Wet sand is great for trucks and road building, but not so great for favorite books. You talk to the child about leaving the book in a special place and finding a truck or shovel to take to the sandbox. He agrees and makes sure his book is in a safe place before going outside to play. This exchange helped the child “save” his book and still take the initiative in bringing something out to the sandbox. It also helped avoid the guilt that could develop from ruining a favorite book.
INDUSTRY VERSUS INFERIORITY. During the elementary school years, from age 6 to 12, children enter the crisis of industry versus inferiority stage. This period is characterized by many new challenges and the introduction to learning the expectations of society. Children are learning to read, to engage with a larger group of peers, and to master more and more complex skills. Productivity is necessary to complete assignments at school.

Children who are successful in their schoolwork and in other activities learn that industry and productivity are pleasant. When children find themselves repeatedly failing at school or in other settings, they begin feeling inferior and decide that they are inadequate. Helping children establish reasonable goals is an important learning tool. You want children to set realistic goals and maintain the motivation needed to reach those goals. Success must also be seen through the child’s eyes in order for it to be believed. Helping children de-emphasize mistakes and focus on the steps needed to progress helps them learn to solve problems and gain satisfaction from their accomplishments.

The final four stages of psychosocial development include identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego integrity versus despair. These stages begin at puberty and continue through late adult life.

FACING CONFLICTS AND CRISSES. Throughout each of Erikson’s eight stages of psychosocial development, people face conflicts and crises. In Erikson’s theory, crises occur when one needs to respond to a psychological challenge, which may mean adjusting behavior to meet society’s expectations. The reaction to and resolution of these conflicts construct an individual’s social development. According to Erikson, each person learns how to interact with others based on personal experiences with conflict, crises, and resolution of these problems. You form who you are and how you relate to others and to society by your experiences and responses to crises throughout these eight stages of development.

GENDER AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. Moving through crises and stages of social development lead to the establishment of an individual identity. According to Erikson (1968), “Identity . . . is experienced merely as a sense of psychological well-being. Its most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home in one’s body, a sense of ‘knowing where one is going’ and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition of those who count” (p. 165). A major aspect of identity formation comes from the recognition of gender roles in one’s life. Gender roles vary from society to society, which again points to the importance of studying child development within the context of social and cultural contexts.
Many adults are surprised to find that young children are still treated with different expectations according to their gender, even at a very young age. The perception of gender-typed behavior traits of girls and boys (e.g., girls are more compliant and emotionally sensitive, whereas boys are more assertive and aggressive) has been studied, with results showing that many young children, particularly at preschool age, have a one-sided judgment about gender stereotypes due to a combination of gender stereotyping in the environment and young children's cognitive limitations (Berk, 2006). These studies showed that stereotypes are still prevalent. Caregivers and teachers have a great impact in this area; for example, girls who have gone on to careers in science-related fields report that encouragement received from a teacher influenced their career choice (American Association of University Women, 1992). In his later work, Erikson (1974) noted that changes in society regarding gender roles have occurred since his earlier writing and he predicted that "modern life may come to permit a much freer inter-identification of the sexes in everyday life" (p. 333).

**Applying Erikson's Theory.** Erikson’s theories bring important messages to your work with young children. Your understanding of the four stages or levels of development associated with early childhood and of the major crises associated with each stage will assist you in nurturing the social growth of young children in your care. Realizing that a toddler is attempting to establish her independence and take initiative in her activities helps you support her in reaching her goal. Recognizing that an infant is learning to trust others when you provide consistent and warm care lets you think about the far-reaching consequences of your interactions with this young child.

Erikson also emphasizes the significance of play and opportunities for children to take the initiative and to make choices in their play. Often, the primary role of the adult is to observe children at play and allow them to experience the consequences of their actions (of course, within safety limits). For example, establishing a time for “free play” helps young children learn to make choices of activities. They might also learn that other children choose the same activity and consequently toys or play space may need to be shared. Learning the social skills necessary for sharing through their own initiative is much more valuable than being told to share by an adult. You provide the support by establishing clear boundaries within which the children learn social expectations of different situations.

Play is also an environment where gender roles are acted out. We want to pay close attention to avoiding stereotyping of gender roles. All children should have access to dolls, trucks, science kits, balls, dress-up clothes, and quiet-time activities. The language of the adult can affect a child's interest in an activity. For instance, telling a girl that she should be a nurse instead of the doctor would be a flagrant example of gender typing that must be avoided. Many responses to children are made without recognizing the bias of gender typing. Gender-fair practices and encouragement to try out different roles in play activities must be a conscious effort made by caregivers and teachers, with tremendous implications in social development and the formation of identity. The environment and activities that caregivers and teachers create play a major role in social development: learning how to relate to others.

Social and emotional development are closely related. In order to interact positively with others, a child needs a healthy self-image. Maslow developed a hierarchy of emotional development that will be helpful as you create an environment that supports and promotes the social and emotional development of young children.

**Maslow’s Theory of Humanism.**

The work of Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) has presented important implications for the emotional development of children. Maslow’s theory is considered humanistic because it is based on the belief that all people are motivated by fulfilling certain needs. Maslow studied the needs, goals, and accomplishments of successful people and used this informa-
tion to construct a hierarchy, or ladder, of needs. In order for people to reach the highest level of self-actualization, all physiological needs and social-emotional needs must first be met. **Physiological** needs refer to what you need in order to be physically comfortable (e.g., food when hungry or a warm place to be when it is snowing outside). **Social-emotional** needs include feeling as if you belong to a group and are loved. When these needs are met, you may then move to higher levels toward **self-actualization**, where you realize your individual potential.

**MASLOW’S SELF-ACTUALIZATION PYRAMID.** According to Maslow (1987), people move through these six levels in a pyramid sequence as needs are met, as shown in Figure 3.1. Each person begins at the bottom level, with the most basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing, and then progresses to the sixth level. The sixth level represents self-actualization, where one focuses on attaining meaningfulness or goodness. Maslow claimed that a person moving through the levels will stop trying to meet a high-level need if the person becomes deprived of a lower-level need. The focus is then on satisfying the lower-level need first (Maslow, 1987).

Motivation to move to higher levels occurs after the basic needs are met at prior levels. For example, you may recall a time when you were extremely hungry—perhaps your busy schedule forced you to miss a meal. At that time, it would be difficult to think about the beauty in the scenery outside your window as your stomach was growling. You were most concerned with taking care of your hunger. The same situation occurs with young children, who often do not have the ability to figure out how or where they will obtain food. When a young child is hungry and frustrated, you can imagine how difficult it would be for that child to be fully engaged in a learning activity.

**APPLYING MASLOW’S THEORY.** Maslow’s theory brings helpful insights to those working with young children. For instance, when an infant is uncomfortable with a wet diaper, she lets you know by crying and squirming. This child would have difficulty focusing on the different objects in her mobile hanging above her play area. What she
really wants is to get rid of the feeling of a wet diaper. Once the diaper has been changed and the baby is comforted, she might then be interested in looking around and reaching out for nearby objects.

The same is true with a child in a kindergarten setting. Think of a child entering a new school and not knowing any of the children or the teacher. He probably doesn’t feel too safe or secure; in fact, he may want his parent, sibling, or caregiver to stay at school for a while to provide the needed security and safety. His teacher might spend some time showing him around the room and introducing him to a few children, watching to see if he begins to feel more comfortable. Again, the child needs to have his basic needs met (in this case, security and safety) before moving into a new and unfamiliar situation where he feels ready to explore and learn in his new classroom.

Caregivers and teachers working with young children find it critical to be attuned to these needs and to provide the support needed. This might mean finding a snack for a hungry child, keeping several sweatshirts available for cooler days, or spending extra time with a child who seems to need attention. Maslow’s theory proposes that children who have their basic needs met are more likely to achieve positive self-images. Children who feel good about themselves are also more apt to be interested in socializing with others.

Within social and emotional development is the critical area of moral growth and development. Moral development is included within the broader category of social and emotional development, as moral development and reasoning strongly influence social and emotional interactions.

### Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development

**Moral development** influences understanding the impact of an individual’s actions and decisions on others within society. Have you ever wondered how young children perceive what is right or wrong? Or how they make a decision about what is right or wrong? Or why they might choose to go ahead and do something that they know is considered wrong? These questions lead to thinking about the development of morals.

Piaget and Kohlberg have contributed to knowledge of children’s moral development. Both theorists propose that children go through a sequence of levels as they develop more reasoning power and understand consequences for specific behaviors.

**Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Reasoning.** Perhaps the most widely accepted hierarchy of stages of moral development is the one developed by Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987). Kohlberg conducted his studies on moral reasoning by presenting a child with moral dilemmas, or situations where a child has to decide the best outcome for a problem situation where the situation has no seemingly right or wrong answer. The children participating in the study were asked to decide what a person involved in the dilemma should do and why. The child’s response would then indicate at which level the child was functioning: Level 1—Preconventional Moral Reasoning, Level 2—Conventional Moral Reasoning, or Level 3—Postconventional Moral Reasoning.

Similar to the descriptions of development in other domains, children and adults do not always reach the highest levels of development. Although the stages are loosely connected to age ranges, individuals move through stages at different times in their lives (Kohlberg, 1976). In early childhood settings, you will find most of the children operat-
ing at preconventional reasoning in Level 1, according to Kohlberg’s model, with their decisions based on personal needs and on following the rules.

Moral development is closely related to cognitive and emotional development (Woolfolk, 2007). It would be difficult for a child who has not developed her ability to think at abstract levels to make moral decisions based on higher-level thought. Kohlberg recognized that thinking is required to make moral decisions. His work expressed the need to increase awareness of moral reasoning, both in one’s own thinking and in that of others. At the same time, Kohlberg was cognizant of the role of moral reasoning within a democracy and the important role teachers play in facilitating the development of moral reasoning.

How do children learn moral reasoning? Witherell (1991) suggests that promoting genuine dialogue in the classroom or child care setting is a format to help children make sense of their world. Witherell finds that sharing stories serves as a springboard for discussing moral or ethical action. Other educators also see communication and dialogue about events occurring in the classroom, both within the curriculum and within the daily life of school (e.g., situations that arise during play), as important opportunities for discussions about moral reasoning. Goodman and Balamore (2003) suggest purposely blending moral education throughout the curriculum. According to Kohlberg’s stage model, young children make moral decisions based on avoiding punishment and an expectation of a reward for good behavior. However, children need more than a “Yes, that's right” or a “No, that’s wrong.” To develop their moral reasoning, children need opportunities to resolve conflicts with peers through negotiation and compromise and be encouraged to comprehend another’s viewpoint (Berk, 2006). This suggests to early childhood professionals that very young children are attending to issues of right and wrong, which supports the rationale to respond to young children with their level of moral reasoning in mind.

**APPLYING KOHLBERG’S THEORY.** Some people feel that schools or other public settings should not include moral education in their curricula. In reality, caregivers and teachers continually communicate moral messages to children. The interpretation of rules and children’s behaviors reflect moral judgments (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Young children grapple with moral issues based on observable behaviors and immediate consequences. A close look at the interactions and realities of a day-to-day life in a school or child care situation reveals the inherent inclusion of moral development and the need to attend to learning how to support healthy moral development.

Perhaps the most important consideration for adults working with young children is to respect each child and her individual values. Children at a young age are aware of justice and fairness in their environment and recognize when they are treated with respect or disrespect. Each child brings her own value system and stage of moral development with her to the child care setting or classroom and needs to know that her beliefs are honored.

When an adult understands that children might have a different perspective of right and wrong, they are better able to help a child learn to distinguish from acceptable and unacceptable actions. Learning from Kohlberg’s theory of moral development will assist you in recognizing the stage in which a child might be currently operating. For example, when a 2-year-old takes another child’s toy that was brought from home and runs to the other side of the room to examine the toy, you would not consider this “stealing.” If a similar action occurred with an 8-year-old child in a store, then this might be considered taking an item that did not belong to him. In the case of the 2-year-old, you might briefly explain, “This is Trina’s toy. Let’s check with Trina to see if you can look at it with her.” Children develop their personal value system through their experiences and observing the modeling of others—rarely from being told what to do or what not to do.

Within the early childhood setting, there must also be room for children to make decisions and learn from the results of their own decision making. When situations a 3-year-old child worked through did not seem to turn out quite right, brief discussions or sharing a story about a similar incident might be helpful. The focus of the discussion might be to look at possible alternative behaviors that the child might select if in a similar situation again.
The caregiver or teacher’s role is also one of noting when actions, incidents, or behaviors occur that reflect conflicts in moral reasoning. Name-calling, pushing, taking toys, and not sharing are challenging behaviors that occur in all early childhood settings. The response to these behaviors is how children reason about right and wrong. These conflicts become rich learning tools when used as discussion and reflection opportunities.

Another theory of social learning is behaviorism. Behaviorists consider interactions in the social environment an essential aspect of learning. According to behaviorists, a child’s behavior is shaped by responses encountered in the child’s environment.

**Skinner’s Theory of Behaviorism**

The theory of **behaviorism**, or operant conditioning, is based on the belief that learning is a change in observable behavior occurring as a result of experience (Woolfolk, 2007). Theorists in this field were interested in changes in behavior as a result of consequences from a child’s interactions with his environment. B. F. Skinner (1904–1990) was a behavioral psychologist who developed the theory of operant conditioning (learning through responses and consequences).

**Operant Conditioning.** Have you ever found a piece of chocolate in the kitchen cupboard, bitten into it, and been unpleasantly surprised to find it was unsweetened chocolate meant for baking? You experienced an immediate consequence for your behavior. It is likely that you changed this behavior by reading labels or asking others about the chocolate before taking a large bite next time. This is an example of **operant conditioning**, where a consequence for behavior leads to changes in subsequent actions.

Skinner began his research with rats, which he placed in a Skinner Box and rewarded with food pellets when the rats touched a bar in the box. After a rat learned to press the bar for food, changes were implemented in the procedure. For instance, the rat may need to press the bar three times in succession to receive the food pellet, or the rat may have to listen for a tone before pressing the bar to receive food. To **extinguish** (or terminate) the behavior, food was not given when the bar was pressed and the rat no longer bothered to press the bar. By controlling the environment, Skinner was able to prove that **reinforcing** (providing a desirable consequence following a behavior) the rat’s behavior led to changes in behavior. These experiments were the basis of his theory of operant conditioning, where behavior is influenced by the consequences following the behavior.

**Consequences**, the events that follow an action, lead to changed behavior. The use of **reinforcement** (use of consequences to alter behavior) or **punishment** (action that decreases the likelihood of the behavior occurring again) is purposely implemented to create change in behavior. Returning to the scientific experiments with the Skinner Boxes and rats, you will recall that the behavior of pressing the bar in the box resulted in food. The behavior (pressing the bar) resulted in a consequence that was reinforcing (food).

Operant conditioning is one form of behaviorism, with a focus on consequences that influence future behaviors (Woolfolk, 2007). Each day, you knowingly and unknowingly experience principles of behaviorism. A mother working with her toddler son on toilet training hugs him and gives him a cookie when he uses his potty chair. They both are delighted. This is an example of reinforcing behavior with a reward. The scientific application model of behaviorism (e.g., the rat experiment) might be construed as manipulative on the far end of the continuum of the use of behaviorism. It helps to remember that there is a continuum, or range, of behaviorism, with applications that may be appropriate in certain situations.

**Applying Skinner’s Theory.** In a preschool setting, you notice Stewart showing his painting to the teaching assistant, Marion. Marion responds, “What a beautiful sun you made.” This response might be considered reinforcement by Stewart, who returns
to the painting easel and continues painting suns. The child continues a behavior that is praised.

**JOURNAL 3.2**

*What might be another reinforcement typically used in a preschool setting? How do you feel about the use of reinforcement in promoting learning?*

In a different scenario at this preschool, Tracy keeps poking Brad. Marion walks over to Tracy and asks her to take a time-out. The time-out would be a punishment for the behavior of poking, with the plan that this consequence will decrease the behavior. Marion wants Tracy to eliminate, or extinguish, this behavior, so she creates a punishment (e.g., time-out).

A limitation in using operant conditioning with children is identifying reinforcements and punishments that matter to the child. Some children might be dissatisfied with the response Stewart received about his painting—perhaps they wanted Marion to notice the boats they had painted—so the comment on the suns would not be a reinforcement that would increase the likelihood of the behavior occurring again. With the poking incident, Tracy might like some quiet time, so time-out for her is not a punishment. She might also like to attract Marion’s attention, so she might have seen that consequence as a reinforcement.

An even greater limitation is found in looking only at observable behavior and consequences. This approach to working with children minimizes the child’s thinking and understanding of the situation. Making decisions based only on observable behavior and not on a child’s interpretation of events or your interpretation of the child’s reasoning raises some concerns about control and imposing one’s judgments on the children in your care. Understanding the effects of praise, reinforcement, and punishment helps bring into focus a larger picture of working with young children. Recognizing the impact of one’s statements—as simple as “Great work”—on a child’s behavior helps the early childhood professional make decisions about the use of reinforcement and punishment in her setting. Children might come to expect reinforcement for their learning, which could affect learning if an adult were not present (Kohn, 2005).

By understanding the principles of behaviorism and operant conditioning, an early childhood professional can make decisions about when it is appropriate to use consequences, reinforcement, or punishment. Let’s explore another important theory that influences early childhood education programs and the curriculum design within programs. Components from prior theories discussed in this chapter are incorporated into the model of multiple intelligences.

### Multiple Intelligences Theory

The theory of multiple intelligences (MI theory) draws from each developmental domain and proposes there are at least eight separate human capacities that compose the plurality of intellect (Checkley, 1997). Instead of thinking of intelligence as a narrow measure, Gardner presents eight different intelligences, within which each person is capable of further development and growth.

**Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences**

Howard Gardner (born in 1943) refers to intelligence as having more to do with solving problems and fashioning products within a naturalistic setting (Armstrong, 2000) than the artificial setting posed by most intelligence tests. The definition of intelligence as defined by an intelligence test is far more artificial than that posed by Gardner. Intelligence, as
scored on tests, basically refers to what a person is born with; it is measurable and can be tested. Gardner’s definition examines what a person does with an ability. In addition to the ability to solve problems and create products, a specific intelligence must also meet the following three criteria:

1. Is there a particular representation for this ability in the brain?
2. Do we know of populations that are particularly talented or particularly deficient in this ability?
3. Is there an evolutionary history of this intelligence that can be found in animals other than human beings? (Checkley, 1997)

Gardner’s concept of intelligence is derived from an accumulation of knowledge about the human brain (Gardner, 1999). Every human being has the capacity for developing within each of the eight intelligences, but varying degrees of expertise are displayed with the different intelligences. In order to develop a program for young children based on MI theory, you would want to know more about the children’s abilities, interests, and accomplishments within each of the eight intelligences, as outlined in Table 3.5.

THE EIGHT INTELLIGENCES. Let’s look at each of the eight intelligences, according to descriptions by Gardner (1999), Checkley (1997), and Armstrong (2000). At the same time, teaching strategies that promote learning in each intelligence will be discussed.

Linguistic intelligence, the use of language, is seen in the ability to read, write, or talk to others. This intelligence is highly valued in schools. A primary focus in the early years of elementary school is literacy development, which demonstrates linguistic intelligence. Storytelling is a teaching strategy that allows the caregiver or teacher to weave in concepts, details, or goals that are appropriate to the children. Storytelling has been used for centuries and in many cultures as a medium to share knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3.5 Multiple Intelligence Theory Summary Chart</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTELLIGENCE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Linguistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Logical-mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spatial</td>
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<td>Bodily-kinesthetic</td>
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<td>Interpersonal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naturalist</td>
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Source: From *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, 2nd ed., by Thomas Armstrong, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Copyright © 2000 ASCD. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a worldwide community of educators advocating sound policies and sharing best practices to achieve the success of each learner. To learn more, visit ASCD at www.ascd.org.
Logical-mathematical intelligence refers to logic and mathematical ability. The ability to use numbers, understand patterns, and exhibit reason are the key characteristics of logical-mathematical intelligence. Certainly, mathematical learning is valued, as evidenced in school curriculum. Categorization, for instance, is a teaching strategy that is developmentally appropriate for young children and supports logical learning. Children as young as 3 and 4 years old enjoy sorting materials according to categories, some that they create and others created by those around them. A 4-year-old might sort items by color, then by size, and then according to use. Older children could also record their findings, creating charts and displays of their categorization findings.

Spatial intelligence is the ability to create a visual image of a potential project or idea and then act on this visualization. Think of bridge engineers or interior decorators who must be able to “see” their ideas before creating them. Visualization is a powerful teaching strategy in spatial intelligence. A kindergarten teacher might ask a young child to close her eyes and see a gingerbread man running from the fox before she begins to draw a picture to represent the scene. Visualization can also be used to rehearse the steps or sequence of a task before starting the activity.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence refers to the ability to use one’s own body or parts of the body as a medium of expression or to solve a problem. A ballet dancer and an Olympic athlete are examples of people who have refined their bodily-kinesthetic skills or intelligence. The use of manipulatives in teaching math is an excellent example of the combination of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence with other intelligences. Many young children touch their fingers as they count, using their own teaching strategy for learning the sequence of numbers.

Musical intelligence is the ability to perform musically or to produce written music. People who are highly skilled in musical intelligence think in music patterns or see and hear patterns and are able to manipulate these patterns. Do you remember singing your ABCs? This is an example of a teaching strategy that helped you learn the alphabet. Songs for counting, colors, names, and other familiar objects promote learning through musical intelligence.

Interpersonal intelligence is the sensitivity one has toward others, along with the ability to work well with other people, understand others, and assume leadership roles. Sharing is a way for young children to learn from each other and use their interpersonal intelligence. All ages benefit from sharing and interacting—children can share with peers as well as with children older or younger than them. Depending on the age of the child, caregivers or teachers should adjust their amount of involvement in the directions and guidance of the sharing situation.

Intrapersonal intelligence is the accurate understanding of one’s self (who one is, what one wants, and a realistic sense of what one can do) and the ability to act according to this knowledge. Modeling true-felt emotions with young children provides an avenue for children to observe the range of emotions of others. Once a child reaches school age, curriculum is often presented in a neutral format, with little emotion shown by the teacher. Expressing joy, passion, disappointment, or other emotions sends a message that emotions are part of learning and are welcome in this setting.

Naturalist intelligence is used to discriminate among living things, such as plants or animals, as well as an understanding of other features of the natural world, such as weather or geology. Farmers, botanists, and hunters are examples of roles where this intelligence is used. Spending time outside on a regular basis facilitates naturalistic intelligence. Touching, seeing, and smelling plants outdoors is far different from looking at pictures of the same plants. Asking questions about the differences and similarities between the plants is appropriate for children as young as age 3 or 4. Young children are very observant and can use their categorization or classification abilities with the abundance of natural materials outside their setting.

Armstrong (2000) outlines four key points in MI theory: (1) People possess all of these intelligences, (2) most people have the potential to develop further in each of the intelligences, (3) the intelligences work together, and (4) there are numerous ways intelligence
can be interpreted within each category. Gardner’s work with multiple intelligences led educators to a new way of looking at intelligence and learning.

**JOURNAL 3.3** In which of these eight intelligences do you feel the strongest? What might have led to your development in this intelligence? In which area are you most challenged? What might you do to improve in this area?

**APPLYING GARDNER’S THEORY.** When you nurture children’s individual abilities and build rich learning activities, you provide experiences in multiple disciplines. You also provide different ways to learn the same material or knowledge. Some children might learn the names of colors best by sorting colors, others by classifying their crayons, others by painting and drawing, others by memorizing colors according to familiar objects (e.g., school bus yellow or stop sign red), and others by singing a song about colors. Your role is to ensure that you use different teaching strategies to reach all your learners.

Gardner (1993b) proposes that an individual-centered school should assess each child’s abilities, goals, and interests to match to particular curricula and to the ways of learning that prove comfortable for that child. Children should be involved in experiences that continually stimulate them as they develop within each of the intelligences. There are multiple ways to learn and a variety of ways to show what each child has learned.

With this approach to curriculum, you would plan different activities that involve several of the multiple intelligences in a setting that includes hands-on learning and opportunities for children to explore their environment. An example of stimulating multiple intelligences would be when young children listen to a story about making musical instruments (linguistic intelligence), play musical instruments (musical intelligence), dance to the music (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence), make one of several instruments (spatial intelligence and logical-mathematical intelligence), work together to create a band to play the grand finale (interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence), and create instruments selected from the natural environment, such as reeds (naturalistic intelligence), differentiating which types and sizes of plant make the best sound and why. Of course, not all activities would include all eight intelligences, but planning around the eight intelligences prior to an activity will help you incorporate multiple intelligences throughout a project.

In the next section of this chapter, you will have an opportunity to watch these theories in an early childhood classroom setting. Get ready to observe a group of preschoolers involved in learning!
Theory into Practice: A Visit to Preschool

Now that you have some beginning ideas about theories of development that influence early childhood education today, you are going to resume your visit to the Creative Learning Cooperative Preschool and observe this group of 4-year-old children. This is your time to examine the major developmental theories “in action.”

CASE STUDY: Starting the Day

As the children enter the preschool, their teacher, Keith, begins the morning by greeting each child with a personal comment. He tells Samantha, “I am so glad you shared your painting with ‘new colors’ with us. Today, we will all get a chance to try this out.” The children also have news to share with Keith. Maria says to Keith, “My baby brother has a new tooth this morning.” Keith replies, “Oh, a new tooth! A top tooth or a bottom tooth?”

Making New Colors

Today, this class of 4-year-olds is exploring the principle of creating new colors by combining two primary colors. Their interest came about when Samantha was finger painting and mixed several colors together and excitedly told the children that she made “new colors.” The other children started talking about making “new colors” and were eager to try out some of their ideas.

Several learning centers are set up around the room, with a parent at each center. There are also some materials available on the counter, where children work independently and create their own activities. Some of these materials include transparent, colored pieces of plastic squares; food coloring and small jars of water; as well as crayons, chalk, paper, and some movable color wheels with primary colors.

JOURNAL 3.4 Which theorists would be pleased to see the materials set out on the counter and available for children to use without adult direction? Why?

You see that right inside the door, Marc and Matty are working together with felt marking pens. They are sharing a large piece of paper clipped to an easel. Both boys have a set of markers and are making little circles, then coloring the circles in with the same marker. Two days ago, Keith read a story about painters who mixed paint together and made a new color from two old colors. The boys were following this theme with their marking pens and were trying out different color combinations by making a new colored circle on top of the first colored circle. Keith walks over, noticing their colors, and talks about the old colors and the new colors with the boys. They all name the new colors together.

JOURNAL 3.5 What might Vygotsky say about the use of language in this color activity?

As Keith moved toward another group of children, Marc and Matty were heard talking about mixing three or more colors on top of their circles to see what would happen. After trying a few more combinations and getting muddier “new” colors, the boys began scribbling with the pens and chasing each other’s marker pen lines around the paper. They then put the pens down and began looking for something else to do.

Samantha and Jamil are at the painting area right outside the door. They help each other put on paint aprons and ask a parent for paints and new paper on the easels. The parent brought over cups of finger paint and asked the children if they wanted to start by putting just one color on the paper. Samantha and Jamil both choose yellow paint, making large swoops on their paper. Jamil starts to paint on Samantha’s paper and she tells him, “No.” Samantha walks away to find Keith. Jamil then takes Samantha’s cup of yellow paint away from her easel. Keith walks over and begins to talk quietly with Jamil.

Jamil gives the yellow paint back to Samantha and they continue painting. The incident seems to be forgotten. Samantha says, “This looks like a big banana.” They then put their fingers into the container of red paint and add red on top of the yellow. Jamil exclaimed, “Wow! We made pumpkin orange!”

Outside in the Play Area

You hear many children’s voices, happily calling out to each other somewhere around the corner of the building. As you wander over to the side of the building, you see a large play yard with a climbing structure and an area where children are playing with balls. You notice two parents outside with the children. Sandy is watching the children at play while visiting with several children in a sandbox, and Rudy is playing a game with a soccer ball and four children. The game involves saying the name of another child and kicking the ball to that child across the circle. Giggles erupt...
when the ball heads to someone else other than the intended receiver.

In the sandbox, Scott, Tanisha, and Nick are making tunnels, roads, and parking lots with scoops and small shovels. There are yellow construction trucks moving through their building area, as they try out their highway system. They seem to be especially fond of the curves, as they go over and over the curves with small cars and trucks. Scott and Tanisha are talking about the roads and planning to add hills so they can try racing their cars around the curves and hills. You notice that Sandy is watching them, ready to help out if there are conflicts or "sandstorms."

**Colors and Music**

Near the windows, a parent, Ralph, is playing a guitar while Roberto, Danny, and Jessie are composing a song about colors in the rainbow. The beginning of their song starts off with, "Blue is blue, yellow is yellow, but yellow with blue makes green!" The children are singing and dancing to their song, while Ralph follows their lead in creating a tune on the guitar. Marc and Matty are drawn to the music and walk over to listen. They begin swaying to the music and join in the singing.

**JOURNAL 3.6** Briefly describe several different intelligences you observed in the color and music activity, noting which activities connected to a specific area of intelligence.

Nalani, Scott, and Jeremy are busy mixing colored water in different clear containers. A parent is working next to them, making his own colored creations and listening to their talk. He occasionally identifies his discovery by saying, "Oh, I mixed red and blue water and now I have purple." The children watch him and then try out their own combinations. Nalani also talks about her experiment. She says, "My blue and red makes pretty purple water. Be careful, Nalani, keep your water from spilling."

The children continue to paint and watch each other’s new colors appear. Nalani is intent on making lots of new colors. She seems to be expending a lot of energy and, as a result of her efforts, is getting tired. After mixing the colors into her container, Nalani quickly pours her colored water onto the floor. She looks around to see if any adult has noticed the puddle she just made. Now she begins talking to herself, "Nalani, no, no, bad to put water on the floor. Uh oh!" She then hurries away from the puddle.

**JOURNAL 3.7** What type of moral reasoning might Nalani be applying in this situation and which of Kohlberg’s stages seem to match her behavior? What would you do if you were the adult nearest to her?

It is the end of the morning now. The children and adults work together to clean up the different play areas. They had quite a busy morning, filled with many activities. The varied experiences involved colors and mixing colors. Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences was clearly attended to through the variety of activities around the theme of new colors, which supports the growth of intelligence in multiple ways.

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**Revisiting the Morning**

Let’s take a moment to reflect on some of our observations. In the first scenario, Marc and Matty used felt pens to make colors on the paper, and continued to draw circles and add new colors on top of the old colors. Because they were adding more and more colors, each combination created a brownish hue and they soon became bored with the activity. When Keith walked by and interacted with them about their two color combinations and named the colors with them, you observed their language use in color identification and an increased interest in the activity. You also observed that without new direction or guidance, they soon became bored with the activity and were ready to move to something different.
Both Piaget and Vygotsky would note that the children were interacting with their environment by experimenting with colors in various media, which supports each of their theories of discovery learning. Erikson would appreciate the choices of activities for the children, as well as opportunities for interesting interactions among the children and adults in the setting. Bruner would agree with Erikson—that children learn best when they choose their materials and discover principles independently. The materials available on the counter would enable children to choose what they needed to “prove” their ideas. Also, open-ended questions from adults would help children move toward proving their hypotheses or predicted outcomes of their experiments, again in alignment with Bruner’s theory of discovery learning.

During the second scenario, the finger-painting activity, you saw guided direction provided by a parent. The results were interesting, and Samantha and Jamil expressed pleasure at creating a “new” color. Vygotsky would view this social interaction with a more knowledgeable adult as helping the child in the child’s zone of proximal development, where guidance supported new learning. He would also appreciate the use of language throughout the activity, along with the many opportunities for children to name colors and shapes. Skinner might suggest a consequence or punishment, such as a time-out, when Jamil took Samantha’s cup of paint. In this case, Keith chose to discuss with Jamil the feelings of others and to assist Jamil in moving toward an understanding of empathy or caring about the feelings of others.

As you continued to observe, you noticed that the children appeared engaged in their activities and felt free to leave one center and move to other sections of the room. They asked questions of the adults and of each other. You heard many conversations going on around the classroom. There was a sense of safety and security, with boundaries shared by the adults in relation to treating each other with respect. Maslow would find this atmosphere supportive of emotional growth, as indicated through the awareness of the teacher to the children’s needs by welcoming them in the morning, offering snacks, and continually scanning the classroom to assure that children are safely engaged in interesting activities.

Many of the theorists’ major ideas and each of the different developmental areas discussed throughout the chapter were represented in this brief snapshot of a preschool morning. Keith, the teacher, had planned the curriculum to reflect the children’s interests as well as their developmental levels. The curriculum also reflected Keith’s personal philosophy of theories of development.

**Principles and Insights:**

A Summary and Review of Chapter 3

Whether looking at cognitive, language, social, or emotional development, theorists tend to agree that humans develop in a gradual and sequential process. Theorists also agree that individuals vary in the rate of their developmental growth. Culture and society play a role in the context of development, with some cultures emphasizing certain skills or accomplishments that guide a child’s learning.

Each of these areas of development overlap, with growth in one area affecting the learning occurring in other developmental areas. As the caregiver or teacher working with young children, you have a responsibility to create a rich learning environment based on the principles presented by theorists from each of the developmental domains. Gaining an understanding of these theories and approaches to learning will help you develop your own philosophy of working with young children, which translates into the daily activities and experiences you create with and for them.

Piaget’s work altered the way adults view the learning of young children. According to Piagetian thinking, children move through four stages of cognitive development, acquiring new knowledge, skills, and abilities in each stage. Piaget’s work introduced the notion that children think differently at different ages. His theories led to the idea that experiences in early childhood programs can promote growth within a developmental stage and support movement to a more advanced stage.

Bruner followed Piaget’s work, extending the theory of cognitive development. He identified three stages of cognitive development and supported the stance that learning occurs in these stages as children make meaning of their experiences. Discovery learning, as described by Bruner, is a powerful learning model. Through discovery learning, children interact with materials or examples and draw their own conclusions or general principles based on their investigations.
Vygotsky agreed with Piaget and Bruner about the impact that a child's interaction with the environment makes in learning. His work emphasized the importance of interactions with others and the connection between language and cognitive development. Vygotsky developed the theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which illustrates the zone or space within which a child is learning. With assistance from an older child or adult, a child can achieve more or accomplish higher-level skills than if working alone. Gradually, less help is needed from others (scaffolding) as the child becomes more skilled or able to complete the task independently.

In the area of social development, Erikson identified eight stages of psychosocial development. The core of a child's personality is revealed through her interpersonal relationships (Maier, 1978). A child's personality is also shaped by the crises she encounters and her reactions to each crisis. The four stages of psychosocial development in early childhood present a framework that helps you understand the actions of children at different ages and stages of social development. For example, as you observe a toddler asserting her independence, you might draw on Erikson's theory that the child is testing her autonomy. Paying attention to these stages and the behaviors associated with each stage will help you plan activities and curriculum to support social growth.

Social and emotional development are closely related. Social development can be thought of as growth in interactions with others, whereas emotional development is the growth of a sense of self. Maslow's self-actualization pyramid reminds you that a child's basic needs must be met before she is ready to learn and to interact jovially in her environment. Children's physiological needs—such as hunger, thirst, or rest—must be attended to before they willingly engage in learning activities.

Moral development falls within both social and emotional developmental areas. An understanding of Erikson's and Maslow's theories will assist you in understanding the social and emotional nature of moral reasoning. In order to make wise decisions about what is wrong or right, a child needs a stable sense of self and the ability to interact socially with others. Kohlberg developed a stage model of moral development, where children move from moral decisions based on following the rules to moral reasoning about different situations based on the specifics of that situation. Listening to stories and having discussions about everyday events (including conflicts in the child's setting) will help children reflect on other's decisions and think about how they might respond in a similar setting.

Each theorist discusses the impact of the child's interaction with her environment as part of the learning process in each developmental area. Behaviorists propose that altering the environment can change a person's behavior. Skinner's work with operant conditioning showed that applying a reinforcement or punishment following a behavior will strengthen or extinguish the behavior. Although behaviorism is used in everyday interactions, early childhood educators are encouraged to examine the practice and make purposeful decisions about when and how to use this model of social learning.

Gardner's work in multiple intelligences presents a learning model that acknowledges and supports the growth of learning in different formats. It is easy to assume that others learn like you, which might lead you to plan most activities to emphasize this area of intelligence. Becoming familiar with the eight intelligences, however, will assist you in planning activities that support learning in each of these areas. Diversity of varied types of experiences enables the young children in your care to grow and develop in multiple intelligences.

As you read the case studies in this book, take time to come back to this chapter and revisit the developmental theories. You will want to bring your new knowledge with you into the different early childhood programs presented in the case studies. Doing so will enable you to assess your emerging philosophy of early childhood education and ground your beliefs in the work of these notable theorists. Your understanding of these developmental theories will continue to increase and expand as you work with young children and observe the theories in practice.

### Becoming an Early Childhood Professional

#### Your Professional Portfolio

1. Thinking of an age group or developmental level of children that you are interested in working with, develop an activity that would address learning in four or more of the different intelligences. Identify each intelligence and discuss how the activity promotes learning in that area of intelligence. Create a chart that shows the relationship of an activity to multiple intelligences, and place it in your portfolio.

2. In a kindergarten class, children are using solid objects to explore the concept of conservation, as described by Piaget. The teacher stacked five books in one pile and...
the children talked about the characteristics of the books as well as the set of books. The teacher then moved the books into single spaces, essentially spreading out the five books on the rug. The children discussed what is different and what is the same between the two sets of five books. Now it's your turn to develop an activity about conservation, using solid objects. Develop a plan and use it to teach someone else in your class or a young child. The plan and your written reflection about the success and challenge of teaching this activity will become part of your portfolio.

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