

Meaningful Curriculum *for Young Children*

Eva Moravcik • Sherry Nolte



Correlation Matrix of NAEYC® Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs and Chapter Content

Standards	Key Elements of the Standards	Chapter and Topic
1: Promoting Child Development and Learning	1a: Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs from birth through age 8.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child Development, p. 12 2. Principles That Influence Physical Development Curriculum, p. 86 3. Understanding Large Motor Development, p. 91 4. Understanding Fine Motor Development, p. 129 5. Understanding Sensory Development, p. 158 6. Understanding Language Development, p. 193 7. Understanding Literacy Development, p. 229 8. Literature and Development, p. 270 9. Understanding Artistic Development, p. 313 10. Understanding Musical Development, p. 358 11. Development and Creative Movement?, p. 391 12. Inquire Curriculum—A Developmental Perspective, p. 418 13. Understanding Math Development, p. 427 14. Development and Science, p. 465 15. Understanding Development and Social Studies, p. 497
	1b: Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Sources of Early Childhood Curriculum?, p. 7 2. What Teachers Need to Know to Plan Early Childhood Curriculum?, p. 12 3. Why Large Motor Curriculum?, p. 90 4. Why Fine Motor Curriculum?, p. 128 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why Sensory Development Curriculum?, p. 158 5. Why Language?, p. 192 6. Why Literacy in Early Childhood?, p. 228 7. Why Literature?, p. 268 8. Why Art Curriculum?, p. 310 9. Why Music?, p. 354 10. Why Creative Movement?, p. 390 11. Why Math?, p. 326 12. Why Science?, p. 464 13. Why Social Studies?, p. 496
	1c: Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments for young children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Environment for Large Motor Play, p. 104 2. An Environment for Fine Motor Learning, p. 136 3. An Environment for Sensory Learning, p. 167 4. An Environment for Language, p. 207 5. An Environment for Literacy, p. 241 6. An Environment for Literature, p. 281 7. An Environment for Visual Art, p. 324 8. An Environment for Music, p. 366 9. An Environment for Creative Movement, p. 398 10. An Environment for Math Learning, p. 441 11. An Environment for Science, p. 475 12. An Environment for Social Studies, p. 509
2: Building Family and Community Relationships	2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics 2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships 2c: Involving families and communities in their children's development and learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Sources of Early Childhood Curriculum—Family, Culture and Community, p. 11 2. Why Integrated Curriculum?, p. 58 3. Designing an Integrated Study, p. 65
3: Observing, Documenting, And Assessing To Support Young Children And Families	3a: Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment—including its use in development of appropriate goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies for young children 3b: Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches, including the use of technology in documentation, assessment and data collection. 3c Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child, including the use of assistive technology for children with disabilities. 3d Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues to build effective learning environments.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elements of a Plan, p. 23 2. Assess and Document Learning, p. 45 3. Designing an Integrated Study, p. 65 4. Assess the Study, p. 78 <p>Activity Plans in Chapter 4–15 include recommended assessments.</p>

Meaningful Curriculum

for Young Children

2nd EDITION

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To the children we have taught and who have taught us.

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Who We Are

When we read a book, we like to know about the authors. We want to understand their experience, background, and point of view. We, the authors of this book, have different backgrounds and different life experiences, but we share very similar views about early childhood curriculum. We both have long held a strong commitment to programs for children that are nurturing and humane and support all aspects of their development.

Eva is a professor of early childhood education at Honolulu Community College. In addition to teaching college classes, her work includes daily contact with children, families, and college students at the Leeward Community College Children's Center. Much of *Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children* grows out of her 30-plus years of creating curriculum for young children and teaching teachers about it. Her daily work with children, families, staff, and college students provides her with grounding in the reality of life in a program for young children.

Sherry is recently retired from Honolulu Community College, where she taught early childhood education for more than 20 years. She continues to teach classes as an adjunct professor, serves as a consultant for early childhood programs, and develops training materials for schools and agencies.

We hope the words and images we share in this book communicate our excitement for, and love of, teaching young children. As you learn to design meaningful curriculum and share it with children, we are confident that you too will experience the joy and wonder that have sustained us in our teaching.

Preface

This book was written for you, a student studying to be an early childhood teacher. Our purpose is to help you develop knowledge of curriculum and an understanding about what makes learning experiences meaningful for young children. We want to share our conviction that young children are entitled to curriculum that has intellectual integrity and our belief that, at any age, real experiences are essential for real learning. We want to communicate our deeply held belief that early childhood curriculum should be a joyful experience for both children and their teachers. We are excited about sharing what we have learned about early childhood curriculum and have strived to create a textbook that will be engaging for you to read and that will provide you with many practical ideas.

The book's focus is on curriculum for children aged 3 through 5, though much is valid for both children in the primary grades and for 2-year-olds. If you are training to work with children under the age of 5, you will probably take one or two early childhood curriculum courses. *Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children* is designed for these courses. If you are training to be an elementary teacher, it is likely that you will take many elementary curriculum methods courses that touch lightly on curriculum for young children. You may be reading this text in a course designed to give you additional expertise. In either case, we assume that you know what young children are like, how they develop, and what constitutes an appropriate early childhood program for young children. If you do not have this background, you will find it useful to read a basic child development text and/or an early childhood foundations text.



Jeff Reese

New to This Edition

In this second edition of *Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children*, we have taken care to use a consistent organizing framework for each curriculum chapter, providing readers with an easy-to-follow structure which promotes understanding of each chapter's content. In addition, you will find the following:

- Updated content throughout the text
- Expanded discussion of curriculum for dual language learners
- New sections on play in each curriculum chapter
- **Some Things to Say**, a new feature that offer students ideas about words to use with children when discussing each curriculum area
- **Two-Year-Olds**, a new section in each curriculum chapter that discusses ways to apply the chapter's content in classrooms for twos
- Examples of **daily, weekly, and integrated plans** focused on a single area of study in each curriculum chapter; this allows students to understand meaningful topic-focused planning
- At the end of each chapter, there are suggestions for things to **Explore and Experience** related to the chapter content. These suggest ways that you can ensure that, like the children you teach, you too are learning from real experiences.

This edition is offered as an enhanced Pearson eText. If you are using this version of the book, you can access the following new features. (Note that these features are not included in 3rd party eTexts, such as VitalSource, Kindle, etc.)

- A digital **Glossary** that allows you to easily reference definitions for many of the key terms used in the text.
- Opportunities to **Assess Your Understanding** of the content of each major chapter section by completing a short, multiple-choice quiz available through hyperlinks embedded in each chapter. Students receive immediate feedback written by the authors about their responses to each question.
- A **Final Assessment** at the end of each chapter allows you to respond to questions that invite deeper reflection about and application of the chapter's content. Author feedback about appropriate content for each response is provided.
- Each chapter includes hyperlinks to **videos** that have been selected by the authors as a means of extending your learning about the chapter's focus.

The Approach of This Book

The cornerstone of this book and of our work with children is what we refer to as a *child-centered* approach to early childhood education. This approach has its roots in a long tradition of humanistic and progressive education and in the unique history and philosophy of early childhood education. Our ideas have been profoundly shaped by educators, psychologists, and philosophers who have advocated child-centered educational practice, including Friedrich Froebel, Maria Montessori, John Dewey, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Erik Erikson, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, John Holt, A. S. Neill, Barbara Biber, Howard Gardner, James L. Hymes, and Loris Malaguzzi.

We believe that curriculum is about children, not assessment, and that every child is worthy of our respect. We know that each child comes with strengths and that the most effective curriculum is built upon those strengths. We trust children to learn through their most natural activity, play, and the serious inquiry that is a part of play. We reaffirm the tenets of John Dewey, who said that school is not preparation for life, but *is* the life of the child. Finally, we are committed, along with Loris Malaguzzi and the educators of Reggio Emilia, to education in which there is “Nothing without joy!”



Jeff Reese

The Book's Structure and Features

Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children has five parts, each with an introduction and three chapters.

Part Structure

The first part, *Understanding Curriculum*, provides you with a brief background about early childhood curriculum, a chapter on planning, and a chapter on integrated curriculum. Each of the subsequent parts addresses curriculum in various chapters for the following domains:

- Physical development (large motor, fine motor, sensory)
- Communication (language, literacy, and literature)
- Creative arts (art, music, creative movement)
- Inquiry (math, science, and social studies)

Chapter Structure

Each of the curriculum chapters discusses:

- Why the subject area is important
- Children's development as related to the subject area
- The skills, concept, and elements of the subject area and the early learning standards that apply
- Strategies for teaching each subject area, including:
 - Promoting play that supports learning in the subject area
 - How to structure the learning environment
 - Creating a schedule
 - Your role in teaching
 - Typical activities that teach this subject area
- How to plan this subject area, including:
 - Typical objectives
 - Examples of plans (activity plans, weekly plans, and integrated study plans)
- Things to consider when teaching the subject area to children with special needs, 2-year-olds, or children in the primary grades

Appendix A provides you with forms that you can use for planning.

Features

FIGURE 9.3 Simple Literature Activity Plan

Activity: Comparing Donald Crews's Vehicle Books

Objectives:

- Recognize similarities between books.
- Understand that a book is created by an author and illustrator.
- Understand that vehicles are machines that transport people and things from one place to another and that there are lots of different kinds of vehicles ("big idea").

What you need:

- Three Donald Crews's vehicle books: *Freight Train*, *School Bus*, and *Truck*
- Poster paper with pictures of the covers of two of the books with "Same/Different" written below
- Marking pen

How to teach:

- Show children two of the books and then read them.
- Put up the poster and ask, *How are the books the same and how are they different?*
- Write children's ideas on the poster paper.
- Read what children said.
- Show the third book and ask: *What can you guess about this book?*
- Excuse children to activity time by asking them to say something about one of the books.

Assessment:

- Name several similarities between books.
- Say all books were created by Donald Crews.
- Say all books are about vehicles.

▲ SIMPLE ACTIVITY PLAN

Brief overview of a field-tested plan format, consisting of objectives, materials needed, how to teach, and how to assess children's learning and development.

FIGURE 9.5 Weekly Plan: Vehicles

Objective: To learn that vehicles are machines that transport people and things quickly from one place to another and that there are lots of different kinds of vehicles.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Morning Story	<i>Freight Train Inside</i> Donald Crews	<i>Trains: Steamers/ Pulling/ Rolling!</i> Patricia Hubbell	<i>The Little Engine That Could</i> Willy Poy	<i>School Bus</i> Donald Crews	<i>Red Wagon</i> Renee Lissak	
Outdoor Activity	Balls and Hoops Develop large motor coordination Build a distinction to be physically active	Visit from Coby the Service Dog Learn about dogs in everyday life Learn about how people take care of their pets	Ballboats in the Water Table Develop the concept of boats as vehicles Learn about boats and how they move	Water Table with Soap Explore the physical properties of water Develop sensory awareness and fine motor control	Busy Bus Stop Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life Understand the purposes of public transportation	
Small Group 1	Examining a Car Learn about a car, its parts, and what they are called Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life	Comparing Donald Crews Vehicle Books Learn to recognize similarities between books Learn that a book is created by authors and illustrators	Acting Out: The Little Engine That Could Develop awareness of plot and characters in stories Develop the ability to express ideas through words and actions	Drawing Vehicles Develop an awareness of vehicles and their components Develop ability to represent what is seen	City Bus Ride Learn about public transportation Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life	
Small Group 2	What Vehicle Do You See? Book Develop vehicle-related vocabulary and concepts Develop awareness of story structure	Reading Boat Books Develop the concept of boats as vehicles Develop an interest in reading and books	Guided Block Math Activity To recognize and create patterns and become aware of relationships	City Bus Ride Learn about public transportation Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life	Examining a Golf Cart (With Ayla's Dad, Fred) Learn about a car, its parts, and what they are called Learn about the role of vehicles in everyday life	
Indoor Special Activity	Tissue Paper Collage Develop the ability to express ideas through art media Develop skill using collage technique	Tissue Paper Collage Develop the ability to express ideas through art media Develop skill using collage technique	Liquid Water Colors Develop the ability to express ideas through art media Develop skill using paint as a medium of expression	Making Smoothies (While the Frogs are on a Trip) Develop appreciation for nutritious food Learn to follow a simple recipe	Making Smoothies (While the Lion Dancers are on a Trip) Develop appreciation for nutritious food Learn to follow a simple recipe	
Circle Time	"Little Car, Little Car—Movement Song" Develop the ability to sing loudly and express ideas through music and movement	Walk & Stop, Hop & Stop—Movement Develop physical self-control and coordination	Take Air Riding in Your Car Car—Song Develop the ability to sing loudly and keep a steady beat	Apple Pie Roll—Song Develop the ability to sing loudly and express ideas through music	Children's Choice Song/ Movement Develop awareness of music and movement	
Environment Additions:	Outdoor: Role-in-cars, Vehicles in Sandbox Table Games: Vehicle Matching game, Truck puzzle Discovery: Tire, magnets					
Evaluation/Notes:	Children especially enjoyed the bus trip. Next time try to have at least 4 adults/small group. Although we didn't plan it, we wrote a group story about the trip the following day and this helped the children consolidate what they learned and gave them an additional way to share their experience with their families. The yellow boxes identify activities that provide understanding of literacy concepts and opportunities to use literacy skills.					

▲ WEEKLY PLAN

This 5-day calendar (for a week) is focused on an integrating topic and shows all the planned activities; those in the subject area are highlighted to illustrate how the content area is included in an overall weekly plan.

FIGURE 9.4 Detailed Language Activity Plan

Activity: Opposite Word Game

Description: a language activity that is a fill-in-the-blank and matching card game.

Who's it for?: The *Ice Cream Cones*; ten children; 4-years-old, particularly Adrianna and Jackson

Rationale: Many of the *Ice Cream Cones*, particularly Adrianna and Jackson, have begun to use opposites in their speech and to talk about the idea of opposites. This activity will allow them to hear opposite pairs and receive coaching in identifying opposites.

Objectives: *By participating in this activity, children will . . .*

- Use simple opposite word pairs correctly.
- Use the word *not* in appropriate contexts.

Standard: Use language in a variety of ways.

Needs:

Materials/equipment	Space/time	Preparation/set-up
Twelve cards with pictures of concepts that have easily identifiable opposites, for example, an empty glass, a puppy under a table, a tall building, etc. Eric Carle book: <i>Opposites</i>	About 15 minutes during small-group time	Make picture cards

Teaching

Introduction: *to get children interested and help them know what to do*
When children are settled, tell them you have a new word guessing game to play. Say something like, "Yesterday at breakfast, Adrianna and Jackson noticed that the oatmeal was hot and the milk was cold. These words are opposites; cold is the opposite of hot. Today we are going to play a game to try to name words that are opposite to each other."

Steps: to teach the objectives:

- Hold up the picture of the tall building and say: "This building is tall; it is not _____." (pause) The children will probably chime in with "short" or "tall." "Right, this building is not short; it is tall. The opposite of short is tall."
- Model with a second picture. For example, hold up a picture of a steaming cup of cocoa and say, "This cocoa is _____ (pause). Some children will say "hot," encourage them by saying, "It is hot, it is not _____." The opposite of hot is cold"
- Allow each child in turn to select a card. Ask the child to hold the card up. Say the sentence with the pictured modifier, e.g., "The car is in the garage; it is not _____ (pause) under the garage."
- As children understand, they may be able to answer with sentences with limited or no coaching.
- Offer prompts as necessary so that everyone will be successful.
- After all children have had a turn, remind them that we used opposites.
- Read the book *Opposites* by Eric Carle, encouraging children to guess the opposites as you read the story.

Closure: *to end the activity, consolidate learning, transition to the next activity*
Excuse children individually by offering each an opposite to guess; for example, "Jackson, the opposite of top is _____. Okay, you may choose a center."

Plan for assessment

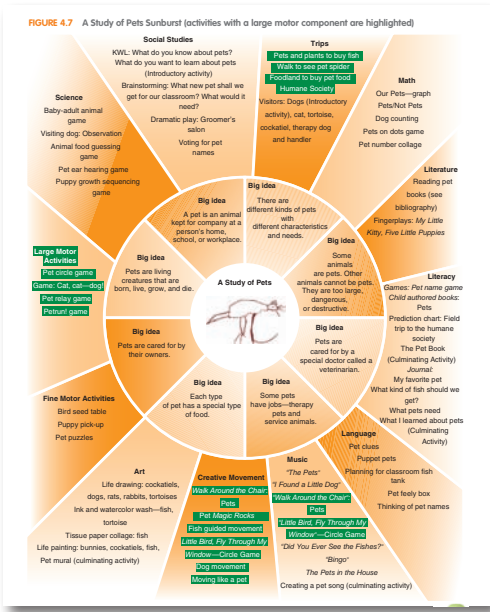
Objectives	If the objective is met children might . . .	How to document . . .
Use simple opposite words pairs correctly	Use the correct opposite word to correspond with the picture card Discuss opposites in their play and use them correctly	Anecdotal observations
Use the word <i>not</i> in appropriate contexts	Correctly fill in the blank in the word game Use the word <i>not</i> correctly in conversation	Anecdotal observations, written language transcripts or audio recording

EVALUATION: The children were interested in this activity and the pictures were effective in capturing their attention. Follow-up with a game where they use their bodies to show opposites.

▲ DETAILED ACTIVITY PLAN

A more detailed, field-tested plan format that

- Demonstrates how to plan for a specific group of children (WHO the plan is for)
- Explains the connection between what was observed and what was planned (the RATIONALE)
- Lays out OBJECTIVES for the activity related to the subject area
- Gives an example of a STATE STANDARD related to the activity and the objectives
- Identifies a "big idea" related to an integrated study topic that the activity helps to teach
- Lists what is needed and how to prepare for teaching (NEEDS)
- Describes TEACHING (a plan for an introduction, teaching steps, and closure)
- Demonstrates how to PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT (what to look for to assess if the objectives were met and how to document this)
- Gives an example of an EVALUATION (what a teacher might want to remember for next time)



MAPS OR “SUNBURSTS” OF INTEGRATED STUDIES

A colorful graphic (called a curriculum map or sunburst) shows how all areas of curriculum can be integrated around a topic of study. As in the weekly plan, the chapter subject area activities are highlighted in the sunburst. The individual activity plans and the weekly plans are selected from activities shown in the sunburst.

Try It Out!

Spend some time talking to a child about any topic that interests him or her. Respond to what the child says by clarifying and expanding his or her comments. Try to create a dialogue with the child that has five or more back-and-forth conversational interchanges.



TRY IT OUT! ►

Boxes are sprinkled throughout each chapter that encourage you to be metacognitive about your own learning and teaching of particular things as well as supporting children as they develop and learn. They suggest ways that you can have a brief, practical experience that will consolidate learning.

SOME THINGS TO SAY When Reading a Story . . .

To focus children's attention

- Look at the book. I'm going to hold it here. Can you see it? Great!
- Show me your hands! Show me your shoulders! Show me your nose! Show me your eyes looking at the book!
- Take a deep breath. Hold it. Now breathe out slowly. And we'll start our story.

To introduce the story

- I wonder if you can guess what this book is about. It's called _____ and there's a picture of _____ on the cover.
- This book is written by _____. She wrote another book we like.
- Have you ever _____? Well that's what happened to someone in this story.

To explain a word or concept in the story

- He/she looked at the _____, which is a little like _____.

- It said _____, which means it was _____.

To help a child who wants to talk

- I want to know more about that. Will you tell me after the story?
- There's something about that on the next page—let's read it and find out.

To help a child who isn't focused

- Child's name, guess what the character is going to do? But keep your idea inside and see if you're right when I read it.
- Come sit next to me—I think it will be easier for you to enjoy the story over here.

When the story is over

- What surprised you about that story?
- Did that ever happen to you?
- What do you think she'll do now?

► SOME THINGS TO SAY

In each chapter, these provide examples of things teachers might say to promote learning in the subject area.

CLASSROOM SCENARIOS ►

Many scenarios, including interactions between children and a teacher and descriptions of developmentally appropriate teaching and learning, are presented throughout the book.

Willy, one of the 4-year-olds in the T-Rex Turtles group, has cerebral palsy. He has limited use of the right side of his body, but is able to walk using a walker. He loves to ride trikes, which he moves by pushing with his left foot. Though Willy cannot yet run, jump, or climb, he is actively included in the large motor curriculum. Willy is creative in finding ways to be a full participant, and the teachers and children in the class enjoy thinking of ways to overcome barriers. They change the way games are played and create new roles for Willy.

IN PRACTICE ►

These are specific ideas on how to implement this curriculum area with children in the classroom.

Reflect on everyday communication . . .



Think about the skills you use every day to communicate your thoughts and ideas to other people. Identify a simple message you have given today, such as, "The battery on my computer is low" or "Where do you want to eat tonight?" What skills did you need in order to convey this information to someone else? What skills did the other person need to understand your meaning?

IN PRACTICE: Tips for Conversations with Young Children

- Get close.** Crouch or sit at the child's eye level. It's easier to hear children's words when you are at their level and physically close to them.
- Pay attention.** Show your attention physically as well as verbally with eye contact, smiles, nods, a gentle hand on a shoulder or back. Focus on what the child is saying. Remember this is about the child, not about you.
- Listen.** This can be challenging in a room filled with active preschoolers! If you must handle another situation, tell the child you want to listen and will come back; then be sure you return at a calmer moment!
- Talk about what is happening.** Narrate what's happening like a "sportscaster." "Emma chose the two square blocks for the base of her structure and Marvie used rectangles." "It took a lot of sand for us to fill this bucket all the way to the top." This gives children opportunities to organize thoughts and ideas before they speak. Be careful to allow time for children to reflect and speak also.
- Respond to, clarify, and extend children's language.** This motivates children to continue talking. Clarify what children say, and build on or extend their language. Introduce vocabulary as well as more sophisticated language structures.
- Read nonverbal communication.** Notice and put into words what the child is feeling and thinking: "You're really happy," or "That's very exciting," or "It's a little scary."
- Don't hurry or interrupt.** If you don't understand, say, "Show me." "Tell me more about that."



◀ REFLECTIONS

In each chapter, margin notes pose questions to encourage you to reflect and think more deeply about the subject area and its relationship to your own life and learning.

TYPICAL OBJECTIVES ►

In each of the last 12 chapters, there is a table of typical objectives designed to help you to pinpoint and clearly write objectives for your activity plans.

TABLE 9.2 Typical Objectives for Literature Curriculum

	Knowledge	Skill	Attitude/Disposition	Experience
Younger Preschoolers (3- to 4-year-olds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that print is different from pictures Identify characters and main events in stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend to a book and follow a story being read to a group Develop and practice book-handling skills Act out a story with pictures or props Ask and answer questions about a book that was read aloud Tell one or two key events from a story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Love books and regard reading as a delightful activity Look at books for pleasure Treasure books and treat them with care Participate in positive story times Develop a disposition to go to books as a source of information Appreciate diverse styles of writing and illustration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to books being read and stories told aloud by a teacher in school Hear rhythm and rhyme in stories and poems Hear and understand book language See and handle good literature appropriate to age and interests
Older Preschoolers (4- to 5-year-olds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand print is read from left to right, top to bottom Recognize difference between fiction and informational books Understand that events in a story relate Understand that books are created by people (authors, illustrators) Name the parts of a book Recognize similarities between books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retell key events from a well-known story, in the right order Answer questions about details of a story with specific information Make predictions based on information from the story Infer characters' feelings or intentions Summarize a story 		

GLOSSARY

Many of the terms used in each chapter are defined in a digital glossary in the Pearson eText. This is designed to be a quick reference to help you consolidate understanding.



Watch this video that shows children engaged in a variety of planned physical development activities. How do the teachers support children's participation?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBqh3eJuD8s>

◀ VIDEOS

Each chapter contains links to videos (in the Pearson eText) related to the content area. These offer examples of children learning, demonstrate master teachers teaching the subject matter, and/or provide additional information from subject-matter experts.

ASSESS YOUR LEARNING ►

In the Pearson eText, digital assessments in a multiple-choice format are provided at the end of each major section of all chapters. You receive immediate feedback, written by the authors, about the correct answer, which can reinforce your learning.

✓ **Assess Your Learning 7.6:** Click here to assess your understanding of the concepts in this section.

✓ **A Final Assessment:** Click here to assess your understanding of this chapter.

◀ FINAL ASSESSMENT

At the end of each chapter, you can complete an assessment that helps you evaluate your understanding of the major points of the chapter. Questions are in a short-answer format and you receive immediate feedback about each answer.

WHAT TO DO NEXT ►

This section at the end of each chapter include resources for further reading, a list of organizations related to the content area, and real experiences designed to enhance your deeper understanding of concepts covered in the chapter as well as encourage you to practice new skills.

What to Do Next



Read

Select one of the books or articles from the bibliography and read more about language development and curriculum.

Investigate

The following groups and organizations have websites that are helpful for creating meaningful language curriculum:

- **PBS Parents**, the Public Broadcasting Service, maintains a website with many types of resources for parents. The "Education" tab contains helpful information about reading and language development and appropriate activities.
- **Speaking of Speech** is an interactive forum for speech/language pathologists and teachers designed to improve communication skills in schools through the exchange of ideas, techniques, materials, lessons that work, sources for materials, and resource links.
- **Mama Lisa's World** is an online resource for songs, games, and activities for children from around the world.

Explore and Experience

Observe a program. For a morning, see how the staff structures the environment and program to support children's language learning. Notice both the play opportunities and the planned group activities. Look at the plans and see how the planning reflects what you observed.

Spend time with a master teacher. Observe a language activity. Interview the teacher and talk with him/her about planning for and providing language experiences to young children.

Observe language activities in two early childhood classrooms. Compare their similarities and differences. Reflect on which seems to best support children's learning, and why.

Observe a classroom where children speak more than one language. Notice the strategies that the teacher uses to include all the children. Notice the ways that DLLs communicate with the English-only-speaking peers and with others who speak their home language. If possible, ask the teacher about the ways she includes DLLs in her classroom.

Watch a movie in a language you don't know. Many DVDs have the option of listening to the movie in another language. Notice what you do to figure out what's going on and how it feels.

Create a Resource

Create a language materials file. Put together a file of activities to do with children to build language skills. Add to this file as you progress through your studies and your career.

Design and make a language learning material. For example, create a listening game, rhyming activity, a language comprehension game, etc. Share it with children and observe how they respond. For your portfolio, include a photograph of a child using the material and a reflection on what you learned about yourself, children, the learning materials, and teaching.

Instructor Supplements

The following instructor supplements to the textbook are available for download on www.pearsonhighered.com/educators. Simply enter the author, title, or ISBN, and select this textbook. Click on the “Resources” tab to view and download the available supplements detailed next.

Online Instructor’s Resource Manual

The Online Instructor’s Resource Manual (ISBN 0-13-444416-7) includes chapter overviews and objectives, lists of available PowerPoint® slides, presentation outlines, teaching suggestions for each chapter, and questions for discussion and analysis.

Online Test Bank and MyTest Test Bank

The Test Bank (ISBN 0-13-444418-3) provides a comprehensive and flexible assessment package. The computerized test bank software, TestGen (ISBN 0-13-444417-5), is a powerful assessment generation program that helps instructors easily create and print quizzes and exams. Questions and tests are authored online, allowing ultimate flexibility and the ability to efficiently create and print assessments, anytime, anywhere. The Pearson TestGen includes a rich library of assessment items that can be edited to fit your needs. Visit pearsonhighered.com to log in, register, or request access to Pearson TestGen.

Online PowerPoint Slides

The PowerPoint Slides (ISBN 0-13-444420-5) highlight key concepts and summarize text content. These guides are designed to provide structure to instructor presentations and give students an organized perspective on each chapter’s content.

Online Test Item Files in a Variety of Formats

Conversions of TestGen are available for a variety of learning management systems.

Acknowledgments

Creating a book is a long and arduous process. It starts with the seed of an idea. The authors plant the seed in the fertile ground of possibility and imagination. With a great deal of work and help from many people, it germinates and matures.

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We did not have time to write this book and would have been content to teach our classes with cobbled-together readings had it not been for Julie Peters, our editor. Julie convinced us that writing this book was both important and possible. Her encouragement, support, and not-so-gentle pushing made this book a reality.

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.....
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PART 1

Understanding Curriculum

Lively intellectual curiosities turn the world into an exciting laboratory and keep one ever a learner.

LUCY SPRAGUE MITCHELL

This book is written for you, a future or current teacher of young children. It concerns early childhood **curriculum** (what you teach) and **pedagogy** (how you teach). Our goal is to help you understand, plan, and implement meaningful and appropriate curriculum for young children.

As an early childhood teacher, you will be challenged to design engaging experiences that will result in children constructing an understanding of the world, developing the skills they need, and acquiring attitudes that will lead them to become caring and productive human beings. Nothing will so clearly distinguish you as a professional early childhood educator as your knowledge of what and how young children learn and your ability to help them learn in ways that preserve their zest for learning.

This first part of the book (Chapters 1, 2, and 3) is designed to set the stage for the parts that follow. It provides you with an introduction to early childhood curriculum and helps you learn how to plan.

In Chapter 1, *Curriculum That Engages Young Children*, we describe what is meant when we talk about curriculum in early childhood education and how it is distinct from curriculum for older children. We look at where early childhood curriculum has come from, discuss where it is today, and point to where it is going. We map out what you need to know and be able to do in order to plan curriculum, explain how curriculum is organized, and make explicit our point of view that:

- learning should be a playful, joyful, and meaningful experience for children.



- all areas of children's development are important.
- planned learning experiences need to reflect and be responsive to children's interests, needs, and learning styles.
- curriculum for young children is not a collection of trivial activities, but rather is an intentionally designed sequence of experiences that respects children as serious learners.
- children learn best when curriculum is integrated (i.e., organized around a topic of study).

Chapter 2, *Planning, Implementing, and Assessing Curriculum*, describes what planning means in programs for young children. We examine the different kinds of strategies that are used to teach young children and discuss why we choose particular strategies.



Jeff Reese

We provide examples of different kinds of plans and describe what they should include. We take you through a step-by-step process for writing useful, complete, and appropriate plans. Because we want you to continue writing plans once you leave the college classroom, we have included examples of simplified activity plans, weekly plans, and graphic illustrations of integrated curriculum. We also show you some ways to meaningfully assess and document children's learning.

Finally, in Chapter 3, *Planning Integrated Curriculum*, we give you some background on integrated curriculum and explain why we feel it is the best way to organize the early childhood curriculum. We describe some models of integrated curriculum and show how they are similar to and different from one another. Finally, we provide you with criteria for selecting a topic for an integrated study and show how to design one.

This book reflects our values and beliefs about the way people become teachers. We also believe that:

- you as a learner are worthy of respect and come with unique skills and experiences that will help you to teach.
- like children, you must construct your own knowledge through active engagement.
- like children, you will learn best when you are playful, enthusiastic, joyful, and serious about learning.
- it is the job of the teacher to create curriculum for young children that is engaging, interesting, and worthwhile to both children and their teachers.

The work you are preparing to do is profoundly important to society as a whole and to the young children you will teach—they need and deserve a competent and caring teacher. We hope this book will help you to be that teacher.

**Reflect on
your hopes
and dreams of
teaching . . .**



Imagine yourself teaching a group of young children. What words describe the teacher you hope to be? Write them on a sheet of paper and put it up near where you work to remind you of your dreams. Add to or change them as you learn more about teaching.



Jeff Reese

*“Would you tell me please which way to go from here?”
asked Alice. “That depends a good deal on where you
want to get to,” said the cat.*

LEWIS CARROLL



chapter one

CURRICULUM THAT ENGAGES YOUNG CHILDREN

Learning Outcomes

In this chapter, you will learn to:

1. Define curriculum and how early childhood curriculum reflects the ways young children learn.
2. Describe the origins of early childhood curriculum.
3. Explain what teachers need to know to plan early childhood curriculum.
4. Describe the different ways early childhood curriculum can be organized.
5. Identify the processes involved in designing curriculum.

From the moment they are born, children are learning. One of the most exciting and important things that you will do as an early childhood teacher is to create curriculum that fosters children's inborn curiosity and their eagerness to learn.

What Is Curriculum?

When they speak of **curriculum**, early childhood educators may have in mind different, but related, things. Some are thinking of something very broad—everything the child experiences both in and out of school. This can be called the **umbrella curriculum** (Colbert, 2003). Others are thinking of curriculum models, comprehensive educational approaches that combine theory and practice and

address the learning environment, teaching strategies, and teacher support along with curriculum content. The **High/Scope model** (Hohmann, Weikart, & Epstein, 2008), the **Montessori method**, the **Reggio Emilia Approach** (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), **Waldorf Education**, and Bank Street College's **Developmental-Interaction Approach** (Nager & Shapiro, 2000) are examples of curriculum models. Still others, when they speak of curriculum, mean a purchased document or collection of prepared lessons that addresses either the whole early education program (e.g., the *Creative Curriculum*) or a content area (e.g., the *Breakthrough to Literacy* curriculum). These are typically referred to as **packaged** (or *commercial*) **curriculum**.

While it is worthwhile to understand the variety of ways that the term *curriculum* is used, this will not be particularly helpful to you in learning to design and implement curriculum for the young children with whom you work. In this book, we will focus on another view of curriculum—the planned curriculum. We define **planned curriculum** as curriculum designed by a teacher or team of teachers using what they know about early childhood subject matter and teaching strategies to intentionally design learning experiences in response to what they know and observe about children.

**Reflect on the
meaning of
curriculum . . .**



What does the word curriculum make you think of? What images come into your mind? How do you feel when you hear the word? Make note of your responses for later reference. At the end of your study of curriculum, come back and review your notes and see how your perspective has changed.

How does early childhood curriculum reflect the ways young children learn?

Whatever grade, age, or subject they teach, all teachers want their students to be enthusiastic, engaged learners. What makes good curriculum for young children different from curriculum for older children is that it reflects the ways that young children learn—ways that are significantly different from the way older children learn. Those of us who teach young children not only recognize these differences but treasure them. What is unique about the ways young children learn?

Young children learn through play and active exploration. They learn through all of their senses. Unlike older children and adults who can memorize facts that are presented abstractly, young children need real experience with real things in order to understand them. Those of us who teach young children know this and base our curriculum on play and real experience.

Young children learn best when they have many direct experiences with the world around them. This involves taking children into the world of people and relationships or bringing these experiences to them. Real experience through trips, visitors, and real-world activities (e.g., cooking, caring for pets, setting the table, watering the garden) are essential for learning.

Young children learn as a whole. Their bodies, feelings, and minds must all be engaged. All of us learn better when we are rested, fed, interested, and happy. But young children cannot learn unless they are. We can house their bodies but we cannot teach them if we don't provide physical and emotional care. They need safety, comfort, and joy to learn. Those of us who teach young children make children's physical and emotional well-being our number one teaching task. As they say in the exemplary preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, we strive for "Nothing without joy."

Young children learn through repeated experience over time. Once or twice is not enough. Children need many opportunities to experience a concept or develop a skill. Fortunately, they are usually immensely patient. Those of us who teach young children allow them lots of time to learn and lots of chances to repeat experiences. This may be contrary to the strategies of some commercial curriculum guidebooks and the traditional curriculum of many schools, which place a premium on novelty. And it is quite different from the fast pace of today's society. However, it reflects what we know about children and how they learn.

Young children learn by reenacting what they have experienced. This is why dramatic play, blocks, language, and the arts are at the heart of the preschool and kindergarten curriculum. These are the ways that children transform what they have experienced into concepts they have learned.

Young children learn as individuals. Early childhood curriculum can't be "one size fits all." Young children need learning experiences that match their particular interests, learning styles, and needs. Those of us who teach young children provide diverse ways for children to learn. We don't use cookie-cutter lesson plans; after all, there are no cookie-cutter children.

Young children learn from relationships. Their interactions with their peers, their teachers, and their family members are more than pleasant social interludes. They are critical to learning. Young children need the important people in their lives (their teachers and their families) to communicate with one another and provide consistent support. They need opportunities to learn from other children. Those of us who teach young children understand that relationships are a vital part of the curriculum.

Young children learn best when home and school work together. Because young children first experience skills and concepts in their homes, early childhood teaching requires a partnership between the family and the teacher. Those of us who teach communicate with and involve families in the curriculum.



Jeff Reese

✓ **Assess Your Learning 1.1:** Click here to assess your understanding of the concepts in this section.

..... The Sources of Early Childhood Curriculum

All curriculum is based on a vision of society (i.e., what we wish society, and people, to be like), values, a philosophy, a particular view of learners and teachers, and the ways educators translate this vision into learning experiences. It can originate from three broad sources: (1) beliefs about what is worth knowing, (2) knowledge of learners and their development, and (3) knowledge of subject matter.

Curriculum is also a product of its time. Social and political forces influence educational values and practices. For example, in the United States in the early years of the 20th century, when many immigrants were arriving, a strong curricular emphasis was placed on the acquisition of the English language along with American culture and values. In the years following World War II, curriculum reflected the value that society placed on nuclear families. Today's curriculum mirrors the cultural diversity that is prevalent and more valued today than it was in the past. It echoes society's increasing concerns with young children's readiness for school, educational **standards**, technology, and the acquisition of basic content, especially literacy and math. Tomorrow's curriculum will address these and new concerns in ways that we cannot yet anticipate.

In the past, early childhood education stood somewhat apart from vacillating popular points of view regarding curriculum and pedagogy. Many of today's programs have their roots in what can be referred to as the **humanistic approach to education**—an approach that reflects concern for the potential of human beings. The creative thinkers who contributed to this tradition were concerned with issues that included respect for human dignity, the role of education in contributing to all aspects of children's development, the connection between mind and body, the importance of creativity, the value of play, the usefulness of observing children, and the important role of families in children's overall well-being. They also saw childhood as a valuable time in its own right, not just as a preparation for adulthood.

You can hear these views in the words of the historical founders of our field:

"The proper education of the young does not consist in stuffing their heads with a mass of words, sentences, and ideas dragged together out of various authors, but in opening up their understanding to the outer world, so that a living stream may flow from their own minds, just as leaves, flowers, and fruit spring from the bud on a tree."

John Amos Comenius,
Didactica Magna (The Great Didactic), 1638

"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul."

Friedrich Froebel,
The Education of Man, 1885

While devoted deeply to the growth of ideas and concepts, you have similarly consistently shown that education must plan equally for physical, social, and emotional growth.

James Hymes,
speech to the National Association of Nursery Educators
(NANE), 1947

There is an "educational pendulum" that swings between emphasis on the nature and interests of the learner and emphasis on the subject matter to be taught. Each swing reflects a reaction of people to perceptions of the shortcomings of the current educational approach. The swinging pendulum of popular opinion has some important implications for you as an early childhood

Reflect on the
curriculum
of the
schools you
attended . . .



What was taught in the classrooms of your early years? What do you remember most about the curriculum? When were you motivated to learn more? Do any of these experiences influence you today? What are the implications of these experiences for you as an early childhood educator?

educator. One is that you must be aware that there will be ongoing shifts in accepted views of curriculum and teaching during your career.

There is greater pressure today than ever before for early childhood educators to address standards and demonstrate the effectiveness of their teaching. This offers new challenges, but as we change, we always try to remember the history of our field and keep our focus on meaningful learning and the development of “the whole child.” Our goal is to help you learn to design curriculum that reflects these historical views and is responsive to the new realities. As you develop your own teaching style, we hope that you will join the long line of educators who put children first.

Influences on Curriculum Decisions

As you think about curriculum for children, you will decide on the content to be taught, how to organize it, and how to present it. These decisions will be based on your values and beliefs about children and education (and those of the program in which you teach); your assessment of children and knowledge of their families, culture, and community; and your appraisal of what content is worthwhile for young children to learn.

Values and Beliefs

What you teach and how you teach reflects your values for society. The children you teach today are potential doctors, politicians, caregivers, artists, teachers, parents—people who will make decisions and do work that will affect the lives of others (including your own).

What do you want the people of the future to be like? What kinds of knowledge and skills will the children you teach need so they can be productive citizens in society both as it exists now and as it changes in the future? Your answers to these questions will help you to determine your **aims** as an educator—your mission.

What do you believe about how children learn and what they should be learning? Do you believe children are self-motivated and self-directed learners who will naturally choose what they need to learn? Do you believe that selecting what children will be taught is the responsibility of adults who have more experience and knowledge? Your beliefs about children’s motivation and ability to choose worthwhile learning experiences will have an influence on what you teach and on the ways you choose to teach it.

Early childhood educators typically believe in children’s inherent ability to learn. They believe that all areas of children’s development are important and that play, child-choice, and cooperative relationships are essential parts of the child’s educational experience. They value the individuality and dignity of children and families, and appreciate their culture and community. They also believe that adults have a responsibility to select rich and diverse educational experiences for children. In this book, we will try to give you the information and skills that you need to teach in ways that reflect these values.

Reflect on
the role of
education in
shaping the
future . . .



Think about what you want the world to be like in the future. What will people need to be like in order for the world you envision to exist? What do children need to learn and experience in school in order to become these people?



Jeff Reese