TENTH EDITION

A Practical Guide to EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM

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A Practical Guide to Early Childhood Curriculum

Tenth Edition

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PREFACE

Many are the times
we will teach.
Many are the times
we will be taught.
. . . But only once, a child.

PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

While preparing to teach, pre-service teachers become imbued with educational theories, but then often find themselves in the classroom as student teachers or professional teachers without practical knowledge of what and how to teach. They understand the theories of learning, but they often are unable to blend these theories with practical applications appropriate for young children.

In this textbook, we not only emphasize *how* to teach, but also we provide a solid foundation for the theoretical basis of the concepts being applied. We want students to understand *what* can be taught to young children, *why* it is important, and *how* it can be accomplished. We also emphasize the importance of a child-centered curriculum that encompasses the whole child—physical, social, emotional, creative, and cognitive. We take a developmental approach to teaching young children; that is, experiences are planned in accordance with the developmental needs of the children in the classroom or center. This book focuses on cognitive areas of the curriculum and effective methods of curriculum implementation. Its purpose is to explore how children learn; what children can learn; and the specific concepts, ideas, and strategies that are developmentally appropriate for young children.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

When writing new editions, it is both exciting and challenging to research and address current topics and ideas, while still maintaining our own basic philosophy and approach to early childhood education. In this revised edition, our goal has been to add available resources that will provide additional suggestions and supports to students and new and seasoned teachers of young children. Theories and historical perspectives are important and readily available in many textbooks, so we have condensed some information in this text in order to expand the practical approach. New to this edition are the following:

- The Pearson eText is presently the only eText platform that supports the various enhancements described in the following. Other e-book formats are available, but only the Pearson eText provides the noted assessments and videos.
- Each chapter is designed with **Learning Outcomes** or objectives.
- As the reader completes each outcome or objective, there is a digital integration titled **Check Your Understanding**. This quiz or formative assessment is for the reader to check understanding of each learning outcome.
- At the end of all chapters there are also summative assessments, **End of Chapter Quiz**, digitally integrated, that instructors will use to assure that the learning outcomes for the chapters are understood or mastered. All assessments are formatted as pop-ups from the Pearson eText.
- Three to six brief, digitally **integrated video clips** have been added to each chapter. These videos illustrate the concepts students are reading about and they can then see application of the ideas presented in real classrooms. Prompts or questions will encourage readers to view the videos.
- A digital **Glossary** to help student readers understand key terms or phrases and their definitions used throughout the text has been added as something new to this edition.
- A new chapter has been created (Chapter 9) titled Math and Science. This is an overview of teaching Math and Science and follows with four specific chapters on science and math (i.e., Physical Science, Earth and Space Science, Life Science, and Mathematics).
- New national standards have been included in the text. Students will find numerous ideas for incorporating these standards into the daily curriculum.
- New photographs visually support areas of study, with captions reminding readers of important concepts.

A Practical Guide to Early Childhood Curriculum evolved from the constant inquiry and search for meaningful teaching ideas by pre-service and professional teachers. It also evolved from our teaching experiences in the primary grades, in Head Start, and in college and university classrooms and laboratories. The concepts selected for inclusion are those that most often meet the needs, interests, and developmental levels of children ages 3 through 8 years. However, they should not limit your thinking, planning, and imagination, but rather should serve as a springboard for selecting projects and themes to explore, both in course work and in classrooms with young children.

CHAPTER PEDAGOGY

The unified pedagogy follows a specific format for most chapters: learning outcomes; introductory comments, including content information; approach to teaching; chapter summary; student learning activities; and suggested resources. The Introduction provides an overview of the chapter as well as specific background and guidelines on the concept or concepts; the Summary reviews the notions presented. The approach to teaching provides very specific content information, precise concepts, ideas that are developmentally appropriate for young children, and many explicit ideas for classroom activities and experiences. In addition, as appropriate, unit plans or project webs are shared or illustrated within the approach-to-teaching section.

Lesson Plans

Occasionally, lesson plans are included within the chapters to show students how one teacher might apply the concepts in the chapter. However, most lesson plan illustrations appear in Appendix A, and recipes are presented in Appendix B. The format for the lesson plans is very simple and may be modified or adapted. There are many instructional design formats, and the ideas presented in this text can be adapted to various designs. In Chapter 4, we suggest a comprehensive design format called Teacher Work Sample (TWS). We believe TWS is the most appropriate design format available today because it adopts all of the very best practices relating to curriculum planning. It begins with the teaching context and ends with reflection on the unit or lesson. The components of the TWS model are sound, and we encourage students to develop expertise in this format.

Other Applied Features

To make the text more readable, we have included some boxed content in every chapter. In addition, in the chapters that include "Concepts and Ideas for Teaching" sections, we have consistently boxed this section. The Student Learning Activities at the end of each chapter offer discussion questions and many suggestions for applying chapter concepts within the university or college classroom.

Also included in this edition are standards from various professional associations. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the present impact of standards on early childhood classrooms and curriculum planning. Content area chapters include standards from national organizations.

CONTENT COVERAGE AND ORGANIZATION

In this current edition, a number of major changes have been made, including some reorganization of the chapters. The text is divided into five parts, each presenting a solid theoretical discussion and rationale.

Part One includes four chapters and provides an introduction and framework for the text. **Chapter 1** is an overview of early childhood education and addresses its past, present, and future. The importance of early childhood education is also considered in depth. Developmental appropriateness of early academics, assessment, curriculum, and the physical setting has been incorporated into Chapter 1, along with theories of learning and children's excitement for learning. **Chapter 2** provides direction for developing partnerships among families, schools, and communities. **Chapter 3** addresses purposes and administration of various assessments appropriate for young children, and **Chapter 4** presents a detailed discussion on curriculum planning.

Part Two presents skills and concepts related to understanding and dealing with the self and others. Helping children learn about people and appreciating their diversities, focusing more on similarities than differences, is presented in **Chapter 5**. Although multicultural and anti-bias education is integrated throughout the text, it is also considered in greater depth in this chapter. Helping children learn more about families and themselves, social and emotional health, character education, resiliency, physical and nutritional fitness, and general health issues are all included in **Chapter 6**.

Part Three includes six chapters that directly relate to literacy development in the early childhood years. All curriculum development rests on the child's literacy ability, and **Chapter 7** focuses on language development, including speaking and listening activities. **Chapter 8** reflects our beliefs regarding the importance of comprehensive literacy development, including reading and writing.

Part Four emphasizes that young children should not only be taught to learn, memorize, and take in facts, but they must also learn to think deeply—to classify, explain, investigate, question, observe, sort, wonder, synthesize, communicate, analyze, compare, hypothesize,

and predict. **Chapter 9**, a new chapter, provides an overview of science and math. Science concepts and ideas for incorporation into the curriculum are discussed in **Chapter 10, Chapter 11**, and **Chapter 12. Chapter 13** relates to math concepts and emphasizes problem-solving skills. Children should learn to solve problems initially by working with concrete ideas; then, equipped with some process skills, they become able to generalize and handle more abstract problems.

Finally, Part Five includes a chapter on music and movement (**Chapter 14**) and creativity, art, and dramatic activities (**Chapter 15**). These vital experiences should be incorporated frequently throughout the curriculum, and not planned as only occasional endeavors.

Occasionally, we suggest the use of foods as art media; but we consider it imperative that children learn early the value of using and preserving, rather than wasting, food. Sometimes a food item, such as macaroni, may be more economical than purchasing beads for stringing necklaces. Also, discarded items such as oranges and potatoes from the grocery store or from family kitchens often expand the possibilities for creative art activities.

Previously, we read a statement that delightfully supports our own feelings regarding working with children, and we include it here: "Young children keep us from stalling in neutral gear. They make us drive in the heart of the center lane of life" (Chenfeld, 1995, p. 71). We find that working with young children is refreshing and helps keep us focused on the importance of the early childhood years. Our desire is that this text, which supports the child-centered and constructivist points of view, will assist you in planning and implementing a fully integrated, developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum.

INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES

Many suggested resources for each chapter are provided in the **Instructor's Resource Manual**. Literally hundreds of new books and audiovisual and technology works are published each month in early childhood alone. Based on the kind of computer you have and your budget, we suggest you periodically evaluate new software choices for your school, classroom, or center. The software you select should be developmentally appropriate, utilize a variety of approaches, emphasize a variety of concepts, and encourage problem solving.

Assessment items for this edition appear in various formats: a **Test Bank** in Word; the same items in a customizable **TestGen**.

PowerPoint slides are also available for each chapter. Key concepts are presented and the slides are editable.

All supplements are available online. To download the supplements, go to www.pearsonhighered.com and then click on "Educators."

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BRIEF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

part 1

Introduction to Early Childhood Education

The chapters in Part 1 provide an introduction to, and overview of, this textbook. The focus of this book is on children ages 3 to 8 years or prekindergarten through third grade, and the curriculum emphasis is on play. During early childhood, more concepts and structure should be added to the curriculum very gradually. We emphasize that even though there have been major sociological and technological changes in our society over the past years, developmental rates have remained constant. Children need environments and learning experiences that are geared to their needs, not highly academic curricula planned around what adults think children ought to be learning and doing. Young children need child-centered environments that offer many opportunities for choices and encourage learning through play, exploration, and discovery.

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chapter 1
Early Childhood Education and Developmentally Appropriate Practice

CHAPTER LEARNING OUTCOMES

1.1 Discuss the contributions of past philosophers, psychologists, and educators regarding early childhood education in the 21st century.

1.2 Recognize the importance of quality early childhood programs.

1.3 Identify the roles and key qualities for effective early childhood educators and the professional standards used to guide the field of early childhood education.

1.4 Explain how children learn and the meaning of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), including ways to ensure the presence of DAP in early childhood classrooms.

1.5 Describe the importance of balancing direct teaching with child-guided play, the purposes and benefits of play, and the importance of developmentally appropriate materials.

1.6 Indicate ways in which a developmentally appropriate and curriculum-supportive environment can be created.

The beliefs of many philosophers, psychologists, and educators dating back to the 17th century have influenced early childhood education as it is practiced in the 21st century.

To know where early childhood education is going, it is important to know where it has come from.

The needs and values of early childhood education are multifaceted, and so caring, qualified early childhood teachers are paramount to the learning of the developing child. To implement developmentally appropriate teaching practices in the child's early years, it is vital for teachers and caregivers to be aware of the developmental characteristics of the children with whom they are working. This will allow teachers to successfully support the children's progress toward becoming well-adjusted, confident, and thoughtful learners. It is also important to understand the components of children's learning.

A HISTORICAL LOOK AT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The field of childhood development and education began centuries ago and has recently experienced a resurgence in attention. It has been shaped by a range of influences, from philosophers to individual teachers (whose perspectives have the most significant influence on the actual educational experiences of children). Federal laws and programs have also focused on the value of early childhood education for young children, and the importance of standards for programs and curricula is currently receiving widespread attention.

A Brief Historical Overview of Contributors to Early Childhood Education

John Locke (l632–1704), English Philosopher

- Recognized individual differences.
- Stressed the importance of play and early years.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), French Philosopher

- Believed that children should be treated with sympathy and compassion.
- Recognized the value of early childhood education.
- Explained that children progress through developmental stages.
- Asserted that children learn through direct instruction.
- Wrote the classic, *Émile.*
- Stressed the importance of play.

Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827), Swiss Educator

- Proposed that the purpose of education is to develop physical, moral, and intellectual skills and powers.
- Stressed the importance of positive teacher–child relationships.
- Asserted that all persons have the right to an education.
- Founded one of the first European schools to focus on children's developmental characteristics.

Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852), German Educator

- Originated the first kindergarten, based on play and materials.
- Recognized that children have innate gifts to be developed.
- Created the first curriculum designed to meet the specific needs of young children.
- Stressed the importance of teacher–child relationships.

Elizabeth Peabody (1804–1894), American Educator

- Established the first U.S. kindergarten in Boston in 1860.

John Dewey (1859–1952), American Educator

- Emphasized experimentation and discovery learning.
- Stressed the importance of exploration in active, free-play environments geared to the children's own interests.
- Promoted problem solving based on real-life experiences.

Margaret McMillan (1860–1931), English Educator

- Established the first nursery school in London in 1911.

Patty Smith Hill (1868–1946), American Educator

- Was an early pioneer in kindergarten education in the United States.

Maria Montessori (1870–1952), Italian Educator

- Developed the Montessori method, which focuses on development of the intellect through the exploration of materials.
- Opened Casa dei Bambini (Children's Home) in Italy in 1907.
- Believed senses were the source of all intellectual development.
- Developed a set of materials (autotelic, or self-correcting in nature) for teachers to use in a prescribed manner.
- Emphasized the importance of the school and family working together.

Arnold Gesell (1880–1961), American Psychologist and Pediatrician

- Developed norms of children's growth.
- Developed the concept of individual differences.

Jean Piaget (1896–1980), French Psychologist

- Proposed a theory of children's cognitive development.
- Believed that children learn through experimentation.
- Described periods of cognitive development.
- Explained that time and experience are needed for maturation.

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), Russian Psychologist

- Proposed a theory of development describing the social process of learning and the impact of the development of language.
- Developed the concept of scaffolding.
- Developed ZPD (zone of proximal development).

Erik Erikson (1902–1994), Danish-German-American Developmental Psychologist

- Emphasized social and emotional aspects of growth.
- Developed a theory of personality development.

Other Contributions to Early Childhood Education

- Project Head Start, 1960s. A composite of federally funded preschool programs for children from impoverished backgrounds.
- Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (renamed the

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] in 1990). Required that all children be given the opportunity to reach their fullest potential and that children with special needs be included in regular public school programs when possible. As a result, much more emphasis was placed on understanding children with special needs or disabilities.

- The Ypsilanti, Michigan, Early Training Project, 1980s. An ongoing research study supporting early intervention programs.
- Public Law 99-457, Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986. Far-reaching federal policy supporting early childhood intervention for children 3 to 5 years of age.
- *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform,* a report from the National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983. Report resulted in educational program reforms throughout the country.
- Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), 1997. A policy statement issued by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, defining its position with regard to appropriate practices in early childhood education. This approach considers the whole child, while taking into account the individual child's needs.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). (Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] of 1965.) Bipartisan education reform effort that was signed into law on January 8, 2002. It addresses four main principles: stronger accountability, greater local and state flexibility and control, more choices for parents, and emphasis on using methods based on scientific research. Because of this law, states developed plans to improve schools and raise student achievement.
- A federal initiative in 2002, *Good Start, Grow Smart* provided increased training for Head Start teachers in best practices and assurance that preschool program are more closely aligned with K–12 education.
- Reauthorization of IDEA that became effective on July 1, 2005. Designed to improve results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. It aligns closely with the NCLB Act to ensure equity, accountability, and excellence in education for all children with disabilities. It emphasizes both access to education and improved results, based on data and public accountability, for students with disabilities.
- By 2007, increasing emphasis on early childhood programs' use of early learning standards (documents that describe what children should know and be able to do before entering kindergarten) that align to child assessments.
- By 2010, state prekindergarten programs or state-funded programs increase, with many states providing programs that serve the needs of young children prior to kindergarten. In 2010, 53 percent of prekindergarten age children (ages 3 and 4) were enrolled in public and private schools. (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [2012]. *Digest of Education Statistics, 2011* [NCES 2012-001], Chapter 1).
- Common Core State Standards (2010) developed by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, and the Council of Chief State School Officers, for implementation by 2013 and currently adopted by 45 states. They provide standards in mathematics and English language arts for grades K–12.
- Increasing role of technology at home and in schools by young children. In spring of 2012, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Fred Rogers Center for early Learning and Children's Media issued a joint position statement on the use of technology in early childhood. In this statement there was a shift from supporting a ban on screen time with young children to calling for appropriate and intentional use of technology and interactive media for learning.

The historical perception of childhood has evolved from considering it of little value, to seeing it as a "mini-adulthood," to the present day view where childhood is valued as a foundation for learning and development. Various aspects of educational focus over the years have included religious development, character and moral development, self-esteem, physical development, social development, emotional well-being, and cognitive and academic achievement. Most recently, professionals have emphasized total development, or the development of the whole child. Focusing on the child's development guides curricula, instruction, and assessment. Early childhood professionals have benefited from Rousseau, Froebel, Montessori, Gesell, and Erikson, but it is from Piaget that the current philosophy of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) has emerged. From Piaget, early educators have learned the importance of development and the limits it sets on learning. They have

learned that from rich, developmentally appropriate experiences, children can construct their own knowledge and understanding. The aim is to provide the kind of environment and stimuli that will stir children to be curious, active, and thoughtful learners.

☑ Check Your Understanding 1.1

Click here to gauge your understanding of the content in this section.

THE NEED FOR QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Political, social, and economic changes in our society have made families increasingly dependent on outside social institutions to aid not only in educating young children, but also in providing for all their needs. Three major trends that have increased public attention on the care and education of young children include: a) the demand for childcare as more mothers enter the labor force; b) agreement among parents and professionals that young children should have educational opportunities; and c) research evidence that young children are capable learners and that early educational experiences have a positive effect on later school learning (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2002).

As the use of early education programs continues to expand, many acknowledge the need to focus on the critical role that high-quality early education experiences play in helping prepare children for later schooling (NAESP, 2013; Mathews, 2013). Some evidence even suggests that the benefits of early educational experiences extend into adulthood (Campbell et al., 2012; Schweinhart et al., 2005). High-quality programs should not only emphasize formal, structured, academic instruction for young children. Rather, they should focus on multiple domains considered important in the development and care of children (Sabol & Pianta, 2012).

Features of Quality Early Childhood Programs

- Employ teachers who are actively engaged, provide high-quality supervision, and have excellent preparation.
- Require the ongoing professional development of all teachers.
- Support cognitive and social-emotional development.
- Provide positive and responsive interpersonal interactions with teachers.
- Have small class sizes and low adult–child ratios.
- Integrate curriculum goals across areas and domains of learning.
- Make curricula challenging and appropriate to young children's ages, needs, and culture.
- Make programs accessible to all families.

Source: Based on information from: Bowman, B., Donavan, M.S., and Burns, M.S. (Eds.) (2002). *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers,* by B. Bowman, M. S. Donovan, and M. S. Burns (Eds.), Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (2013). *A Call for Excellence in Early Childhood Education*. Washington, DC: NAEYC. Retrieved February 20, 2014, from http://www.naeyc.org/policy/excellence.

Quality in early childhood programs is often difficult to assess because program goals are by necessity less specific. Standardized achievement tests are not developmentally appropriate for children, so it is difficult to define effective ways to evaluate quality early childhood programs. According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP; 1990), quality programs enhance the child's self-image, strengthen social and emotional development, expand communication skills, and stimulate an interest in the world's surroundings. In addition, they expand concepts and notions, encourage independent thinking, and develop problem-solving skills. Quality programs advance motor skills, identify special needs, reinforce respect for others and the rights of others, promote creativity and aesthetic appreciation and expression, and increase the child's capacity for self-control and self-discipline. Providing quality early childhood education is not an easy task. It requires a well-trained and committed staff, a rich curriculum, and adequate resources.

School readiness is not determined by children's innate characteristics. Rather, their development and skills are greatly influenced by their families, interactions with other people, and environments during the younger years (Maxwell & Clifford, 2004). Early education experiences that promote readiness for kindergarten include a child-centered, age-appropriate, and engaging environment; a curriculum and assessment approach that supports individual differences; and responsive, knowledgeable teachers who facilitate learning (Cassidy, Mims, Rucker, & Boone, 2003). As much as possible, children who are getting ready for school should be developing a number of skills and attributes, such as physical well-being, muscle control, coordination, language, cognition and general knowledge, social and emotional skills, and curiosity and motivation toward learning (Biggar & Pizzolongo, 2004). Experts generally agree that school readiness involves not only the child's readiness for school, but also the school's

readiness for the child, and the developmental opportunities provided by both the child's family and the community (National Governors Association, 2002).

Factors Influencing the Need for Early Childhood Education

All children deserve high-quality early childhood education. This is especially true for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Effective preschool experiences help children overcome the influences of poverty (Children's Defense Fund, 2005). We can and must provide high-quality childcare and enriching preschool experiences for all children.

Children from homes where both parents work or from single-parent homes need childcare. There is a need not only for more childcare programs, but also for upgrading the quality of the care given (O'Brien, Weaver, Burchinal, Clarke-Stewart, & Vandell, 2014). Because many young children are still cared for by untrained caregivers, our efforts should not be in just providing quality training to those caregivers, but in reaching the large number of other people who are caring for our nation's young children in community agencies, churches, clubs, and other groups, who also need training.

Children with special needs also benefit from early childhood education. Early education can be viewed as the time to mitigate problems by providing special programs: programs focusing on children who are economically disadvantaged and on the problems often associated with poverty; programs treating learning disabilities at an early age; programs in special education; or programs reaching children with emotional difficulties at a time when negative behaviors have had little time to become ingrained. All children need the opportunity to learn at their highest potential in an inclusive environment.

The Developmental Need for Early Childhood Education

Several aspects of young children's growth point to the need for early childhood education. To foster a balanced human being, it is important to pay attention to social, emotional, physical, moral, and academic development. **Socialization** takes place in the early years, with the family being the first and most important group to which the child belongs. The early childhood group, in which children relate to other children of their own age, is an ideal situation for furthering social skills and development. Through their play, children learn to develop friendships that enable them to refine their social behavior. Sharing, listening to others, developing leadership skills, learning to follow others, gaining confidence in dealing with others, and learning to conform to the rules of the group are all examples of by-products of early childhood socialization.

Children Need Schools That Foster Warm, Supportive Relationships.

The **emotional development** of the child has long been of paramount concern; children need schools that foster warm, supportive relationships (Baker & Manfredi/Petitt, 2004). This relates closely to the development of either a positive or a negative self-image. Children must like themselves. The feelings of being "okay" and important, and of having strengths and direction, make up the positive self-image. Although these feelings are generated from within, they are influenced from outside the child. Teachers and parents can encourage these positive feelings in children. Positive feelings provide motivation and encourage growth, whereas negative feelings stimulate failure and engender bitterness and resentment.

The significant people in children's early environments reflect back to the children how they are viewed, and the children, in turn, decide how to see themselves. These views will form their self-concepts, which will determine their behaviors, attitudes, values, feelings, experiences, and success. The early childhood years are the most effective time to nurture a loving and caring approach to life (Swick & Freeman, 2004). Children who are loved, encouraged, and affirmed at an early age will develop love, confidence, and self-esteem in future years (Bakley, 1997).

Generally, children who feel good about themselves also feel good about their world; their emotions are characterized by spontaneity, enthusiasm, joy, interest, and happiness. Children who do not feel good about themselves view the world with disappointment, anger, resentment, prejudice, and fear. Children cannot be protected from negative emotions and situations, but to be emotionally healthy, they should be equipped to cope with these feelings. Early childhood programs offer experiences that help to develop this coping ability,

which is necessary for emotional health. Much depends on the classroom atmosphere. A supportive classroom increases students' ability to learn how to solve problems in stressful situations, as well as to learn academics (Pohan, 2003).

A basic ingredient in the development of a healthy self-concept and emotional foundation is love. The power of love in the very early years of life is strong enough to make sick children well; the lack of it can make well children sick. Love has such a positive force that it can decrease the child's inevitable moments of pain, frustration, and anger. Love can change, modify, and channel negative feelings into constructive actions and lead toward success later in life. Children's earliest memories are usually associated with people and the relationships the children had with them. It is the early relationships that children have with adults that teach them how to view themselves and how to behave with others (Swick & Freeman, 2004).

Because of liability concerns amid allegations of child abuse in childcare settings, some programs have instituted policies that do not allow physical displays of affection toward young children. These policies fail to recognize the importance of touch to the healthy development of children, especially to infants and toddlers. Young children need positive, nurturing touch to feel secure and loved. As teachers, we must understand that a lack of touch and physical affection can be just as harmful to a child as inappropriate touch (e.g., sexual and physical abuse) (Carlson, 2006). If children are denied touch, or experience touch only through punishment or aggression, they do not learn to tell the difference between appropriate and loving touch from inappropriate or dangerous touch (Carlson, 2006). Warm responses such as pats on the back, hugs, face touches, or ruffling a child's hair show care, concern, and love. However, these responses should always be developmentally appropriate, acceptable to the child, and consistent with each individual child's needs and cultural expectations.

Children have a right to learn and develop skills that will enable them to work, achieve, contribute, and enjoy a fulfilling life (Washington & Andrews, 2010). It is particularly important that teachers assist young children to become contributing members of society by supporting their moral development, providing opportunities for their success, and helping them become involved in their communities (Robinson & Curry, 2005/2006). The relationships we have with children today help form them into the adults of tomorrow (Baker & Manfredi/Petitt, 2005).

Early childhood experiences also aid in the *development of physical and motor functions*. Materials and apparatus should be provided that enable the child to use and exercise both large and small muscles. Large-muscle equipment and activities include climbing equipment, tricycles, wagons, rocking boats, tumble tubs, and locomotor and rhythmic activities. There are also many appropriate physical–motor games for children in the early childhood years. They should be simple to play and noncompetitive. Small-muscle apparatus include puzzles, lacing games and toys, scissors, and crayons, while fingerplays and other activities encourage the use of hands and fingers.

The term *early childhood education* implies teaching the child. Thus, *intellectual* or *cognitive* aspects become an ingredient in the growth and development of the young child. It is well documented that the early years are of crucial importance to the child's intellectual growth. Early childhood education opens up the world to young children through experiences with people, events, animals, places, and other things. A child cannot have an understanding of what a strawberry is, for example, without some experience with it—either a real experience or a vicarious one through a picture or an explanation, in specific detail. The richest and most meaningful experiences for children are firsthand, concrete, or sensory. These experiences may be in school or on field trips.

Although young children need opportunities for learning, mastering skills, and thinking, the process must be slow and organized. Young children must be given time to experience who they are on their road to becoming responsible adults. Pressures for early achievement and academic learning have intensified, but the way that young children grow and learn has not changed.

Some cognitively oriented programs focus simply on accelerating development of the child's IQ. However, the individual child should be the focus, and the curriculum should be planned to help each child reach his or her fullest potential. Basic concepts presented in an exciting way are stimulating, fun, interesting, and involving, and they provide the foundations for both learning and initial attitudes toward learning. Teachers of young children thus have the challenge of providing a curriculum that meets their needs and is relevant for them.

Early childhood educators seek to educate children not only to think, but also to feel and act. When planning lessons and writing objectives, teachers should ask, "What is it that I want these students to know, do, and feel as a result of this lesson?" Teachers should not separate the cognitive from the affective; rather, they should see these domains as integrated parts of the whole and try to gear their instruction to build on this interdependence.

Early childhood education can thus be one of the primary means for meeting and satisfying some of the basic needs of young children: social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and linguistic. The early years are times for the development of language, creativity, thinking, and self-concept. Therefore, the importance of high-quality education during this period cannot be overemphasized.

☑ Check Your Understanding 1.2

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS

In a quality early childhood program, early childhood educators play a key role in ensuring that the needs of all children are being met.

Goals for Early Childhood Education

Educators and other concerned people need to determine how to best provide for the needs of young children and enable *all* children to reach their full potential.

Goals for Early Childhood Professionals

1. Understand the nature of development and learning as well as the individual nature and characteristics of each child.
2. Know what to teach, how to teach, and how to assess what children have learned, as well as how to adapt the curriculum to the needs and interests of individual children.
3. Create a caring and responsive learning environment that is inclusive of the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all children.
4. Establish positive, mutual relationships of trust and respect with families, recognizing that shared goals benefit children and their education.
5. Pursue perpetual professional training and knowledge.
6. Treat every child with respect, dignity, and positive regard. Recognize that every child has great potential.

Educators need to be competent and have a sound set of beliefs, goals, and actions. Early childhood professionals need to be focused on and accountable for accomplishing their goals. Another priority is to continue involving the family in early childhood programs. Strong families strengthen the fabric of our society. The threads are strong individuals who have hope, enthusiasm, and a desire to become educated. Our children must be strong threads—responsible, unselfish, self-disciplined, and positive. The more the teachers collaborate with the family, the greater the child's strides. This involves embracing family diversity, sharing responsibility, and striving for an understanding of each family's values. Still another priority is to improve our professional image by educating the public about the importance of high-quality early childhood programs and seeking to protect and strengthen licensing in states and local communities. Ideally, program standards, regulations, and expectations should be uniform among states, and need to be followed.

Because so many demands and expectations are placed on the early childhood classroom—standardized assessments and curriculum standards—it sometimes seems impossible to achieve DAP (Geist & Baum, 2005). As teachers, we understand there must be expectations and standards for our early childhood programs. Teachers must carefully plan how academics can be effectively and appropriately incorporated in order to maintain quality and successful programs (Gronlund, 2001). Ultimately, early childhood educators must focus on planning and implementing quality instruction that is both *explicit* (e.g., teachers specifically identify and teach objectives) and *engaging* (e.g., instruction is relevant, interesting, and playful; Bingham Hall-Kenyon & Culatta, 2010), while also attending to all areas of development.

Piaget (1970b) believed that a teacher of young children should be highly intelligent and highly trained. Teachers who have quality training and education are more likely to make a significant impact on children's development and learning. Programs can be play-based, but the play must be purposeful (Gronlund, 2001). After following the children's interests, the teacher defines this purpose and intent by setting up the environment and organizing the materials to help children explore, solve problems, practice skills, and learn concepts through hands-on experiences (Gronlund, 2001). The teacher is also the decision maker and most often determines whether a day is successful or unsuccessful. Teachers make numerous decisions each day in the classroom, and in doing so should remember to continually ask themselves if they are providing opportunities and teaching in a way that will enable their students to develop the skills they need to become successful in life and to become contributing members of society (Shidler, 2009). Because the attitudes of the teacher and the teaching staff influence every aspect of the program, including the children's behavior, their attitudes should reflect interest, enthusiasm, creativity, empathy, hope, tolerance, understanding, and care (Shidler, 2009). Research on teaching effectiveness indicates that some of these qualities, in addition to flexibility, communication skills, a secure self-image, and the ability to involve children actively in learning activities, are the most desirable assets in early childhood education teachers. Teachers need to be able to instill a feeling of competence and self-confidence in the children they teach (Shidler, 2009).

Teachers' attitudes should reflect interest, patience, enthusiasm, empathy, hope, understanding, and care.