



EDITION

6

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

BEST PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Marjorie J. Kostelnik • Anne K. Soderman
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Correlation of Chapter Content with NAEYC® Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs

Standard and Key Elements	Chapter and Topic
<p>1: Promoting Child Development and Learning</p> <p>1a. Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs</p> <p>1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning</p> <p>1c. Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments</p>	<p>1: What It Means to Be Developmentally Appropriate</p> <p>1: Examples of Appropriate Practices and Inappropriate Practices Related to Book Reading with Children Ages 3 to 8 (Table 1.1)</p> <p>1: Historic and Empirical support for Developmentally Appropriate Practice</p> <p>1: DAP and DEC Practices – (Table 1.3)</p> <p>1: DAP Programs Vary in Structure and Content</p> <p>1: The Ongoing Discussion About DAP</p> <p>3: Using Principles of Developmental Direction to Enhance Your Planning</p> <p>4: Including Children of Different Ages and Abilities in Whole-Group Instruction</p> <p>5: Creating and Using Learning Centers</p> <p>5: Modifying the Physical Environment</p> <p>5: Examples of Materials Varying from Concrete to Abstract (Table 5.4)</p> <p>6: How Self-Regulation Comes About</p> <p>6: Developmental Influences on Self-Regulation</p> <p>6: How Experience Influences Self-Regulation</p> <p>9: DAP: Making Goals Fit</p> <p>9: Sample Adaptations for Children with Special Needs (Table 9.8)</p> <p>9: Children's Development in the Aesthetic Domain</p> <p>9: Stages of Visual Art Representation (Table 9.3)</p> <p>10: Stress and Resilience: How Children React to Overwhelming Emotional Demand</p> <p>10: Affective Development in Children with Special Needs</p> <p>11: Cognitive Theorists (Table 11.1)</p> <p>12: Oral Language Development</p> <p>13: Health, Safety, and Nutrition</p> <p>14: The Importance of the Social Domain</p> <p>14: Social Skills</p> <p>15: Elements of Pretend Play (Figure 15.1)</p> <p>15: Individual Differences in Children's Pretend Play and Construction Play</p> <p>15: Developmental Stages of Block Play (Table 15.3)</p>
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<p>3: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families</p> <p>3a. Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment</p> <p>3b. Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and with professional colleagues</p> <p>3c. Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches</p> <p>3d. Understanding and practicing responsible assessment to promote positive outcomes for each child</p>	<p>4: Inclusion: Helping Ben at Group Time</p> <p>5: Sample Activity Report (Figure 5.10)</p> <p>5: Sample Evaluation Form (Figure 5.11)</p> <p>6: Authoritative Teaching Skills Rating Scale (Figure 6.3)</p> <p>7: Purposeful and Responsible Assessment and Evaluation</p> <p>10: Examples of Childhood Stressors (Table 10.3)</p> <p>10: Red Flags Signaling Lack of Coping Strategies</p> <p>15: Observation of Basic Pretend Skills (Figure 15.5)</p> <p>15: Observation of Pretend Skills (Figure 15.5)</p>
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SIXTH EDITION

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“I touch the future. I teach.”

—Christa McAuliffe

- ▶ *What are developmentally appropriate practices, and how effective are they?*
- ▶ *How can we create the best programs for young children?*
- ▶ *As early childhood educators, what is our role in shaping children’s educational experiences? What is the child’s role? What is the role of the family and community?*
- ▶ *How can we tell if children are actually learning?*

Questions such as these are typically asked by early childhood professionals-in-training as well as by seasoned practitioners in the field. Our work with students and increasing numbers of educators probing for answers indicated the need for a comprehensive guide to support the exploration, planning, and implementation of developmentally appropriate programs. Thus, our goal in writing *Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education* was to bring together the best information currently available for developing an integrated approach to curriculum and instruction in the early years. We also hoped to bridge the worlds of child care and early education, as well as those of preprimary and primary programs. The resulting volume addresses *early childhood professionals-in-training and professionals working in formal group settings with young children from 3 to 8 years old*. We realize that early childhood education spans birth to age 8 years; however, we see infancy and toddlerhood as unique ages within this period, requiring specialized knowledge beyond the scope of this text. For this reason, we did not focus on infants or toddlers in our discussions.

We believe the information in this book will be *valuable to both newcomers to the field and to master practitioners*. The ideas in this text have been extensively field tested and found to be effective. All are designed to give you a cohesive view of the *what, why, and how of developmentally appropriate practices*.

Finally, we have had many years of experience working directly with young children and their families and with educators in preprimary and primary settings. We have been in urban, suburban, and rural programs; large, medium, and small classes; public, private, not-for-profit, and profit-seeking organizations; half- and full-day programs; preschool classes; and the elementary grades. Currently, all of us are actively engaged in educating young children, the professionals who work with them, or both.

New to This Edition

Of the many changes in the new edition, we are most excited to introduce a new version of *Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum*—the new Pearson eText. The Pearson eText is an affordable, interactive version of the print text that includes

- Videos in every chapter providing concrete examples of chapter content.
- Interactive *Check Your Understanding* quizzes at the conclusion of major text sections that give readers the opportunity to confirm their understanding of text concepts.
- A link to a table at the beginning of each chapter showing how chapter contents align with *NAEYC Early Childhood Standards for Professional Preparation Programs*. This helps students to familiarize themselves with the standards and to connect standards of professionalism to the book’s contents and to classroom practice.
- Glossary terms that pop up when clicked upon.
- Notetaking, highlighting, bookmarking, and other useful functions.

To learn more about the enhanced Pearson eText, go to www.pearsonhighered.com/etextbooks.

In addition to the new eText, there are many significant changes to the sixth edition.

- A new Technology Toolkit is featured in each chapter.
- References are significantly updated, with over 200 new citations.
- Greater emphasis is placed on the core standards and state-based learning standards throughout the text.
- Chapter 1 includes more emphasis on inclusive practices as part of DAP and illustrates a developmentally appropriate kindergarten classroom.
- In Chapter 2, we have made a stronger connection between developmental principles and practice using revised charts and examples; clear distinctions among core standards and early learning standards as well as where to find standards are other new additions.
- A comprehension flow chart for preparing to teach using written plans has been added to Chapter 3. We also included a feature on how to evaluate activity ideas gleaned from Internet sources.
- We have included a new section on whole-group dramatics within Chapter 4 as well as new material outlining the developmental progression of music and movement.
- In Chapter 5, we provide more information about outdoor classrooms and playscapes, a new safety checklist, and an extended feature on how to arrange space to accommodate children with special needs. Material on daily schedules has been shifted from this chapter to Chapter 16.
- The vocabulary in Chapter 6 has been revised to reflect current emphases in the literature on self-regulation. New figures and examples illustrate this concept.
- Chapter 7 includes additional information about screening, the use of sociograms, information about scales to evaluate and rate the learning environment, and more information about the creation, implementation, and management of portfolios.
- The material on family engagement in Chapter 8 has been expanded to include more information on working with families with limited resources, what to do when confronted by an angry parent, and tips for creating a classroom website as well as other ways to connect with families through technology.
- Chapter 9 presents an expanded section on story enactment and several new teaching strategies to support creative movement and dance activities.
- More information about Asperger syndrome has been incorporated into Chapter 10. We have also added new teaching strategies, including new ways to gain family support for affective development.
- Chapter 11 has been greatly revised, especially the mathematics content. We have updated the information on brain research, added mathematics and science vocabulary, and included more information about the importance of counting, perceptual and conceptual subitizing, and commutative properties and operations.
- In Chapter 12 you will find increased information about language development and emergent literacy. There is also material on the Common Core and on technology as a critical literacy.
- Chapter 13 includes an expanded section on physical health and more information about fitness and big body play.
- Chapter 14 has been reorganized to include more information on the importance of social development to overall learning, a stronger emphasis on social skill development and children's prosocial behavior, and extensive new material on how to address social studies from preschool through the third grade.
- Chapter 15 continues to provide a strong rationale for play-based activity in early childhood programs. The relationship between play and learning is a stronger feature in this edition, with greater emphasis on assessing play skills. An expanded section on the academic basis for play in early childhood classrooms has been provided.
- Chapter 16 now begins with a segment on developing the daily schedule as a means to address early learning goals. It features best practices relative to daily and weekly planning and introduces an extensive new project example to illustrate the project approach.

Our Distinctive Approach

Among the popular elements we retained from the previous edition are our focus on developmental domains, a robust research basis for the information provided, and a strong emphasis on practical applications. This remains very much a “how-to” book. The curriculum chapters include rationales and sample teaching strategies specific to each domain, objectives, and illustrative activities. Examples featuring children, families, and professionals from a variety of backgrounds, with a special focus on children with special needs, continue to be a feature of the chapters that compose the book.

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education offers a distinctive approach that increases reader understanding and skill development.

- We treat curriculum as everything that happens to children in early childhood settings. Therefore, the text addresses all aspects of classroom life, including children and adults, the physical and social environments, and teaching and learning from a “whole child” perspective.
- The concept of developmentally appropriate practices is pervasive throughout the text. Each chapter addresses principles of age appropriateness, individual appropriateness, and sociocultural appropriateness. All of the DAP material incorporates the latest version of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood (NAEYC, 2009).
- This book spans the early childhood years from 3 to 8. It provides a comprehensive, cohesive approach that results in greater continuity for children and practitioners.
- Each chapter progresses clearly from theory and research to practice. There is a strong emphasis on the what, why, and how of teaching.
- We use developmental domains to address early childhood curriculum. Doing so helps practitioners better understand the link between development and learning and program implementation.
- Every curriculum chapter includes sample activities.
- The text addresses individual curricular domains as well as curriculum integration.
- Detailed directions facilitate the application of developmentally appropriate practices.
- National and state standards for learning serve as the basis for curricular goals.
- Readers learn a comprehensive approach to conceptualizing, planning, implementing, and evaluating curriculum.

Format and Chapter Sequence

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education has an Introduction and four parts. The Introduction offers an overview of early childhood education today. Part 1, Foundations of Early Childhood Education, consists of Chapters 1 and 2, which address the philosophy of developmentally appropriate practice. Characteristics of the field, the knowledge base associated with developmentally appropriate practice, and critical issues in early childhood education are all outlined in Part 1. Setting the stage for learning is the focus of Part 2, Chapters 3 through 8. In these chapters, we describe the overall understandings and skills necessary to create effective programs for young children. We begin with planning, implementing, and organizing small-group, then whole-group, activities. Organizing the physical space and selecting and storing materials used in the classroom are combined in structuring learning centers. Child guidance, authentic assessment, and family involvement are treated as fundamental building blocks of effective teaching, with individual chapters devoted to each of these topics. In Part 3, Chapters 9 through 14, the curriculum is explained within the context of six developmental domains: aesthetic, affective, cognitive, language, physical, and social. Each of the domain chapters has a discussion of theory, research, and educational issues related to children’s development and learning in that particular arena, a suggested outline of goals and objectives, teaching strategies that characterize the domain, and examples of classroom activities. The curriculum domains are presented in alphabetical order to underscore the idea that no one domain is more important than any of the others. The last section of the book is Part 4, Integrating Curriculum. This part includes Chapters 15 and 16, both focused on creating a cohesive whole. First, we consider the integrative nature of pretend play and construction; second, we consider the integrative aspects of using projects and theme teaching.

Text Features

The sixth edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum* includes numerous features designed to pique reader interest in the material and provide a framework upon which to reflect on and apply the chapter content. Here are a few things to look for:

A new modular chapter organization built around critical learning outcomes and aligned to professional standards

- New chapter-opening learning outcomes align with the major text sections of the chapter. In the eText, readers can click on the learning outcome to be taken directly to the relevant section of the chapter.

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- ▶ Describe how affective development occurs in young children.
- ▶ Discuss conditions under which children cope with stress and develop resilience.
- ▶ Tell how affective development is different in children who have special needs.
- ▶ Implement developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction in the affective domain.



- In the eText, new chapter-opening links correlate the chapter contents to the specific National Association for the Education of Young Children standards covered.

Chapter 1: NAEYC Standards For Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs

The following Standards are included in this chapter:

Standard 1. Promoting Child Development and Learning

I use my understanding of young children's characteristics and needs and of multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child.

Standard 2. Building Family and Community Relationships

I know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. I use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families and to involve all families in their children's development and learning.



Concrete examples bringing developmentally appropriate practice to life

- Chapter-opening scenario examples engage readers and set the stage for the chapter.
- New direct links to video examples in the eText provide concrete examples of text concepts and show early child educators in action.
- Activity suggestions in a variety of instructional approaches—Problem Solving, Exploratory, Discussion, Demonstration, Direct Instruction—provide students with high-quality learning activity models to try out with children and learn from.

► Problem Solving Activity

What's the Question? (For Children of All Ages)

Goal 30 ► Write original stories, poems, and informational pieces.

Materials ► Journals, markers, pencils, easel, easel paper

Procedure ► After reading or telling a story, stimulate the children to imagine what something looks like that cannot be seen, such as a leprechaun. Have them take out their journals and draw a picture of the thing on the left-hand page of the journal. Afterward, have younger children dictate a question they have (e.g., “How big is the leprechaun?” “Where does he live?”); older children can write a question they would like to ask. Tell the children to leave their journals open to that page, and sometime after they leave the classroom and before they return the next morning, an answer appears on the right-hand page of the journal. Although children know that the teacher is providing the answer, they love the fun of imagining that the answer has come from the leprechaun. Some teachers add to the fun by making small footprints across the page to accompany the answer.

To Simplify ► Children at the prewriting stage may act as a group to dictate some of their questions, which you write on the left-hand side of a piece of easel paper. That evening, the questions are answered on the right-hand side. The next day, in large group, ask the children to help you read each question and answer.

To Extend ► Challenge the children to illustrate and write to other imaginary or mythical characters (e.g., unicorn, fairy, or man in the moon) or real objects that are difficult to see (e.g., germs or a mouse that hides). When answering the question they have written, add a question they must answer in turn.

Features helping readers assess and apply their understanding

- New interactive *Check Your Understanding* quizzes in the eText following major text sections give readers the opportunity to confirm their understanding of concepts before moving on.
- *Technology Toolkit* features provide concrete ideas for how to use new technology to support developmentally appropriate practice, for example, how to use Skype to connect children with guest speakers and other children around the world (see Chapter 14).



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Technology Toolkit: Connect Children with Guest Speakers, Virtual Tours, and Other Students Around the World

Imagine taking your class to visit a beekeeper on the job, or to see a wolf sanctuary in operation, or to tour the battleship *USS Missouri*. How about having a children's book author come to your program as a guest speaker or inviting a historian to show children how she uses artifacts to discover new things about old times? Early childhood professionals have long used field trips and guest speakers to enhance the social studies curriculum. Nothing makes content come to life better than visiting someplace new or talking to an expert about something in the world. Using the no-cost Skype in the Classroom (<https://education.skype.com>) platform, early childhood educators now have the opportunity to arrange for virtual guest speakers, tours, and visits with peers, all with the touch of a finger.



- *DAP: Making Goals Fit* features illustrate how to implement goals for children of different age ranges or abilities while keeping in mind the individual needs and the sociocultural background of the children.
- *Inclusion* features demonstrate the actions early childhood educators take to successfully include specific students and meet their goals.

Inclusion ► Adapting Science Inquiry for Children with Special Needs

Every child deserves to have the joy of acting on their curiosity about phenomena in their world, including children with special needs. For children who face greater challenges in exploring materials and the environment or conducting investigations, make use of volunteers or other professionals who can maximize potential. Put yourself in the situation from the child's perspective to think about what accommodations can help a child cope with the difficulties caused by the disabling condition. For example, while the child in a wheelchair may be mobile, he or she is hampered if the aisles in your classroom are too narrow to move easily from place to place. Refer also to the Center for Multisensory Learning, Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley, California, 94720 and the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) for ideas to provide more satisfying experiences (Harlan & Rivkin, 2012).



- Chapter-ending *Applying What You've Read* sections provide readers the opportunity to extend their understanding of chapter content to their professional lives. Every chapter ends with discussion questions, potential observations to make in early childhood settings to help readers recognize developmentally appropriate practices in action, application activities, guidelines for journal entries, suggested items to add to a portfolio, and finally, activities to help readers explore standards for learning that are most relevant to them and the children in their charge.
- Another chapter-ending feature, *Practice for Your Certification or Licensure Exam* questions, gives readers an opportunity to apply their knowledge as it might be assessed through the *Praxis II*® Examination in Early Childhood Education or another exam required at the state or local level. This activity includes a short case describing a child or teacher, followed by a constructed response question and then by related multiple-choice questions. A rubric for evaluating student answers is provided in the Instructor's Resource Manual.

Supplementary Materials for Instructors

The following resources are available for instructors to download at www.pearsonhighered.com/educators. Instructors enter the author or title of this book, select this particular edition of the book, and then click on the "Resources" tab to log in and download textbook supplements.

Instructor's Resource Manual (0-13-355102-4)

This comprehensive instructor's manual describes how to organize a course by using the textbook; how to find, select, and maintain appropriate field placements for students; how to model skills for students to imitate; and how to provide feedback to students assigned to field placements on campus or in the community. In addition, we have included a series of role-playing and conversational activities to be carried out in class. They are designed to show students how to use particular skills prior to implementing them with children and to clarify basic concepts as they emerge during class discussions. A rubric for self-evaluation of the certification or licensure exam examples offered in the chapter-end activities is also provided here. Finally, the instructor's manual contains a criterion-referenced observation tool, the curriculum skills inventory (CSI). This is a unique feature of *Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Best Practices in Early Childhood Education*. The CSI can be used by instructors and practitioners to evaluate the degree to which students demonstrate the skills taught.

Test Bank (0-13-355104-0)

The Online Test Bank consists of multiple-choice, true–false, short-answer, and essay questions for each chapter. The questions are aligned to the chapter-opening learning outcomes.

TestGen Computerized Test Bank (0-13-355101-6)

TestGen is a powerful assessment generation program available exclusively from Pearson that helps instructors easily create quizzes and exams. You install TestGen on your personal computer (Windows or Macintosh) and create your own exams for print or online use. It contains a set of test items organized by chapter, based on this textbook's contents. The items are the same as those in the Test Bank. The tests can be downloaded in a variety of learning management system formats.

PowerPoint® Slides (0-13-355103-2)

For every chapter, a series of PowerPoint® slides has been created to highlight key concepts and strategies.

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Introduction



Self-portraits created by "Moir's Head Start Class."

Learning Outcomes

After reading this introduction, you should be able to:

- ▶ Define early childhood education and explain why the field is growing.
- ▶ Describe the children and families served in early childhood programs.
- ▶ Differentiate among early childhood programs.
- ▶ Talk about what makes someone an early childhood professional.
- ▶ Discuss the importance of program quality now and in the future.



- ◆ *It is open house day at Head Start. Moira and her mom walk down the hallway to Moira's classroom. Moira hesitates at the door. Her teacher comes over and says, "Hello Moira. I'm so glad you're here. When I came to visit you at your apartment you said you liked to play with markers. We have some markers right over in the art area. Come see. Bring your mom so she can see too."*
- ◆ *Evan blows out the candles on his birthday cake. Everyone says he is getting to be such a big boy—after all, this is the year he will go to kindergarten! He can't wait!*
- ◆ *Hector has been anticipating the first day of second grade for weeks. He is excited about his new backpack and the list of reading words he learned over the summer to give to his new teacher, Mr. Pérez-Quñones. He wonders what his teacher will be like and who will be in his class. He and his brother Jorge walk the five blocks to their school. A large banner hanging above the doorway announces:*

Bienvenida a los estudiantes!
Welcome students!

Moira, Evan, and Hector are among the millions of children enrolled in early education programs in the United States. One day soon, you will be welcoming children into your own classroom. What you do, what you say, and how you interact with children and their families will have a profound impact on children's learning. This is an exciting prospect and an awesome responsibility!

A Good Beginning Is Essential

For most children, going to any organized early childhood program outside their home is "going to school." This means that most children begin their "schooling" well before they ever get to kindergarten and beyond. The whole time that children are participating in programs ranging from child care to grade school, they form opinions about themselves as learners and about the whole concept of "school." Depending on their experiences children may conclude:

*"I am a good learner.
School is exciting, challenging, and fun."*

Or, children may decide,

*"I am not a good learner.
School is boring or difficult. It's no fun at all!"*

Which conclusions children reach early in life influences their thinking and actions for years to come. Children whose notions are positive have a strong foundation for subsequent life success. They look forward to coming to the program every day and find joy in learning. You can see this happy feeling reflected in the self-portraits created by Moira's Head Start class that appear at the

beginning of this chapter. On the other hand, children whose self-evaluations and school evaluations are negative have bleak future prospects. These children are more likely to require extensive remedial assistance in school, encounter mental health problems, endure academic failure, and drop out before graduation (Heckman, Pinto, & Saveljev, 2012). Which opinions children form are greatly influenced by their early education experiences.

As an early childhood professional, you play a major role in shaping these experiences. The more you know about the field you are entering, the better prepared you will be to create effective early childhood programs. This introduction provides an overview of early childhood education today. We define the profession and discuss its significance now and in the future. In addition, we describe the children, families, and professionals who learn together in early childhood settings. Finally, we consider differences in quality among early childhood programs and what this means for children and for you. Let's begin.

What Is Early Childhood Education?

Which of the following programs would you classify as early education programs?

- Pre-K classroom
- Second-grade classroom
- Family child-care home

If you answered “All of the above,” you were correct. **Early childhood education** involves any group program serving children from birth to age 8 that is designed to promote children's intellectual, social, emotional, language, and physical development and learning (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Such education translates into a wide array of programs, including those for infants and toddlers, as well as preschool, kindergarten, and primary programs. These programs may be half day or full day; public or private; enrichment or remedial in focus; targeted at low-, middle-, or high-income families; and administered by a variety of community institutions. Currently more children than ever are involved in early childhood education.

The Early Education Field Is Growing

There has never been a better time to begin a career in early education. The demand for early learning programs is increasing. Today close to two-thirds of all the 4-year-olds and about 40% of all the 3-year-olds in the United States are enrolled in some form of organized early childhood experience (Barnett & Frede, 2010; Barnett et al., 2012). The number of 5- and 6-year-olds in preschool and kindergarten is even greater, reaching up to 95% of the U.S. population. By age 6, nearly every child in the United States is involved in some form of classroom-based program ranging from pre-kindergarten through first grade (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013). This boom in early education is happening for several reasons:

1. People are becoming increasingly aware that the early years are critical learning years.
2. Increasingly more families want their children to become involved in early learning experiences before mandatory schooling starts.
3. Evidence indicates that high-quality early education has the potential to increase children's lifelong success and provide economic and social benefits to society.

Each of these trends is fueling a demand for more and better early childhood programs and the professionals who work in them.

The Early Years Are Important Learning Years

During early childhood, rapid growth occurs in children's aesthetic, cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical competence. This lays the foundation for adolescent and adult dispositions, concepts, and skills in every developmental domain. See Table 1 for highlights of the early competencies children are developing from birth to age 8.

TABLE 1 Early Competencies That Form the Foundation for Future Learning

Aesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation of beauty in the world • Respect, tolerance, resilience • Self-expression • Cultural awareness
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number concepts, processes, and skills • Science concepts, processes, and skills • Problem-solving strategies • Concepts of time, space, order, patterns, and categories
Linguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language • Communication skills • Associating meaning and print • Emergent literacy
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social awareness • Work habits and attitudes • Prosocial understandings • Development of conscience • Understanding expectations and rules
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional awareness of self and others • Empathy • Coping strategies
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body awareness • Attitudes toward food/nutritional habits • Body image • Physical mastery—fine motor/gross motor



What early competencies are these children developing as they play the game?

Family Interest in Early Learning Is High

My neighbor used to look after my daughter, but I really wanted Taylor in a learning environment. I moved her here because I didn't want her watching TV all day. When it comes time for kindergarten, I want her to be prepared.

—Parent of a child in a pre-K program
(Kostelnik & Grady, 2009, p. 2)

For the past 40 years there has been steady growth in the number of families seeking out-of-home care for their young children (Barnett et al., 2012). This has paralleled an increase in women going to work while their children are very young as well as an increase in single parents needing child-care support (Schulman & Blank, 2009). When arranging care for infants and toddlers, most families seek such care so adult family members can work, go to school, or participate in job training. However, by the time children are 3 years of age, families say that enhanced learning is the number-one reason they want to enroll the children in a formal early childhood program prior to kindergarten or first grade (Barnett & Frede, 2010).

Early Intervention Pays Off for Children and Society

Based on four decades of research, we know that high-quality early childhood programs can help children succeed in school and later in life. This is especially true for children who are at high risk for potential school failure due to the burdens of poverty (Barnett & Frede, 2010; Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, 2005). Long-term studies have compared the experiences of low-income children who have gone to preschool with children from similar backgrounds who have not. Preschool alumni are less likely than non-program children to repeat a grade, to be referred to special education programs, or to fail to graduate from high school on time (Heckman, Moon, Pinto, Savelyev, & Yavitz, 2010). These positive conditions also contribute to a better quality of life years later. At age 40, adults who had participated in a high-quality early childhood program for at least 2 years were less likely to be on welfare or to be chronic lawbreakers than was true for non-preschool going individuals (Schweinhart et al., 2005). As adults, preschool attendees were also more likely to own their own home, to be employed, to have a savings account, and to report higher satisfaction with life. Such positive outcomes benefit the children involved as well as the families and communities in which they live. Families are aware of these benefits; thus, increasingly more families of all kinds are choosing to send their children to “school” early in life.

What message do you think this childcare center intends for its families?

Children and Families in Early Childhood Education

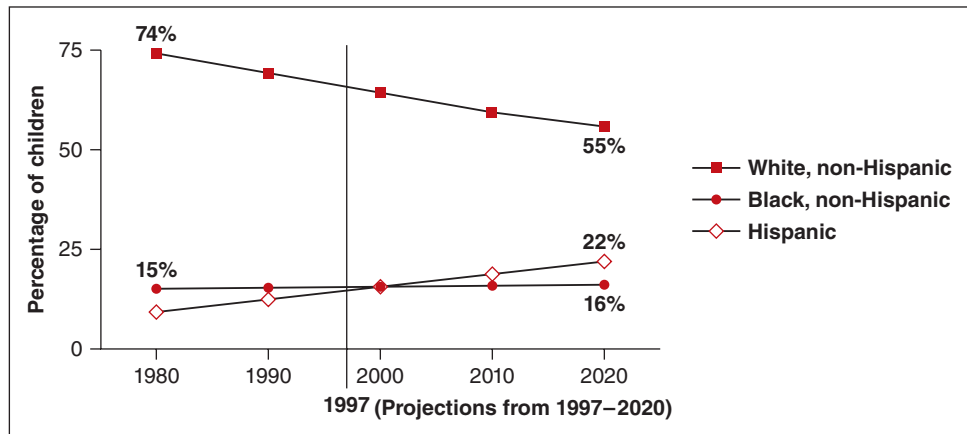
Mary Hughes was making nametags for the children in her class: Juan, Un-Hai, Rachel, Steven, LaTanya, Clarissa, Heidi, Mohammed, Molly, Sally, Keiko, Mark, LeRoy, Indira, Jennifer, and Sasha. As she finished each nametag, she thought about how different each child was. Her students represented many racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. The children varied greatly in terms of their parents’ educational level and their families’ socioeconomic status. Some children spoke English, and several spoke languages other than English at home. Some had prior preschool experience, and some had none. Some children lived at home with two parents, some were living in single-parent households, one child lived with his grandparents, and one youngster was a foster child, newly arrived in her foster home. The children also functioned at varying developmental levels. Mary marveled at the group’s diversity.

Early Childhood Programs Serve a Diverse Population of Children and Families

Like Mary, you will likely work with a diverse array of children and families throughout your career in early childhood education. You will do so because the United States is becoming more diverse every year. For instance, racial and ethnic diversity has increased substantially in the United States over the past 40 years. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), the population of white children in the United States is declining, while the proportion of children who are non-white



FIGURE 1 Shifting Population

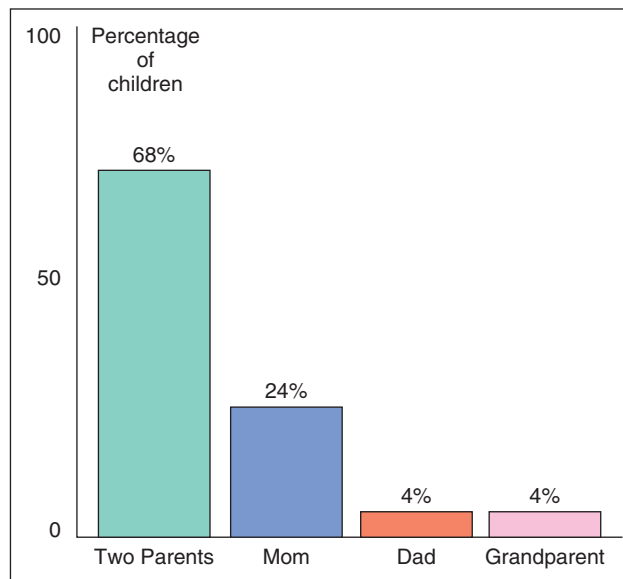


Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Retrieved from <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren07/famsoc1.asp>

is growing (see Figure 1). Also, in many parts of the country, up to 50% of the birth to age-8 population speaks a home language other than English (Espinosa, 2008). Such ethnic and linguistic diversity is predicted to increase in the coming decades.

Family structures are also shifting. Today, children may live in a variety of family arrangements—two-parent families, single-parent families, blended families, extended families, families with opposite-sex parents and families with same-sex parents, adoptive families, cohabiting families, and foster families. Overall the percentage of children living in two-parent households has decreased, while the proportion of young children living in single-parent homes has risen significantly. In 2012, 68% of the children in the United States under the age of 17 lived with two parents. Of these, the vast majority (90%) lived with their biological or adoptive parents; the other 10% lived with at least one stepparent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Approximately 28% of the children live with only one parent. Of these, 24% live with their mothers and 4% live with their fathers. Another 4% of young children live in families headed by a grandparent (see Figure 2). Grandparent-headed households are found in all socioeconomic groups, all ethnicities, and all geographic locations in the country, with more than 4 million children living in intergenerational households (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

FIGURE 2 Family Living Arrangements



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2012). *America's Families and Living Arrangements*. Washington, DC. Author.

Income is another differentiating variable among families. Early childhood programs serve families who have limited financial resources as well as families who have large financial reserves. Some programs serve families whose income levels are within the same range; other programs serve families whose socioeconomic circumstances vary widely. All parents ultimately are responsible for food, clothing, shelter, and medical care and for making sure children go to school during the years of mandatory education. Yet, for many families, simply providing the basic essentials of life is a challenge. More than 16.1 million children from birth to age 17 in the United States live in low-income families. In fact, children under age 5 are the poorest age group in the country, with one out of four—or 5.5 million—infants, toddlers, and preschoolers living without adequate resources (Children’s Defense Fund, 2013). Growing up in a low-income family does not necessarily mean that family members are not in the workforce. Children living below the poverty level may have two working parents (54%), one working parent (27%), or no working parents (20%) at home. Poor families are of every race and live in rural, suburban, and urban communities (Berns, 2013; Douglas-Hall & Chau, 2007).

Another factor that has influenced diversity in early childhood classrooms is inclusion. Children with disabilities have been provided a free public education in the **least restrictive environment** since 1986. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 provided additional protections to people with disabilities, including freedom from discrimination and equal access to public programs. IDEA was updated in 2004, governing how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million infants and toddlers (from birth to age 2) and children and youth (ages 3 to 21) with disabilities. IDEA underscores a U.S. commitment to educate all children, to the maximum extent appropriate, in regular classrooms on a full-time basis. Support services are brought to children as needed; the children are not removed from the early childhood setting to receive the services. Thus, children with disabilities are not clustered into groups of persons with similar disabilities. They are no longer served only in separate classrooms labeled “learning disabled” or “emotionally impaired.”

As a result of these demographic and social trends, increasing numbers of children of all kinds are being served in early childhood settings outside their homes. This requires us as early childhood educators to create responsive early childhood programs that treat all people with respect. Rather than viewing one set of life experiences or demographics as “appropriate” and others as “inappropriate,” we must integrate children’s beliefs, history, and experiences into programs in ways that make sense to children and enable them to flourish as learners. In addition, we must recognize that we have a responsibility to get to know children and families as individuals, recognizing that our personal frames of reference do not necessarily mirror those of all the children and families we serve.



Early education programs are inclusive.

Families Are Children’s First Teachers

During early childhood, the immediate context of the family has the greatest influence on the child. The family is responsible for meeting children’s physical needs and for socializing the younger generation. Family members provide children with their first social relationships, their models for behaviors and roles, a framework of values and beliefs, and intellectual stimulation (Berns, 2013; Center on the Developing Child, 2010). All these functions take place through direct and indirect teaching, in constructive and sometimes destructive ways, more or less successfully. In addition, most environmental influences are channeled to some extent through the family. For instance, through their families, children gain access to economic resources and learn the customs of their cultural group. The first attitudes toward health practices, education, work, and society that children encounter are in the family. Parents arrange for out-of-home care and make the initial entrée into a school for their children. They also promote or inhibit opportunities for peer and community contact. If parents are stressed by the hardships of poverty, the uncertainty of losing a job, or the prospects of their marriage breaking up, their ability to meet the needs of their young children may be jeopardized. If parents receive help or support from relatives, friends, or social institutions, the home environment they create for their children may be enhanced.

Early Education Programs Vary in Scope and Structure

During your years as an early childhood professional, you will most likely work in a variety of settings and programs. Education programs for young children come in all forms. Programs for young children operate under different funding sources (public or private) and vary in location and size (private home, church or temple, small-group center, or large school). Such programs encompass a wide range of educational philosophies and curricula. Early childhood education programs also vary in their target audience, their scope (full day to half day, full year to partial year, every day to some days), and the training background of key personnel. An overview of the vast array of services currently available is offered in Table 2.

These variations in programs serving young children evolved from distinct needs and traditions. For instance, modern child-care programs were devised in response to societal demands for protected child-care environments during parents' working hours. Historically, child-care programs have emphasized the health and safety of the children enrolled, and, although currently some involve government subsidies, many rely on corporate or private sponsorship and parent fees. Supplementing the learning experiences children have at home has long been the function of the nursery school movement. Usually financed through parent fees, today's preschools have nurturance, enrichment, and school readiness as their primary aims. Early intervention programs such as Head Start and Title I are the result of federally mandated and supported efforts to remediate unfavorable developmental or environmental circumstances. These compensatory education programs focus on a particular segment of the population: children and families who are disadvantaged. Such programs are designed to change children's life opportunities by altering the course of their development for the better. On the other hand, primary education reflects a history that emphasizes the commitment of public funds to mass education. The goals of primary education have focused on transmitting society's accumulated knowledge, values, beliefs, and customs to children of all backgrounds and educational needs. Compulsory in some states, not required in others, but available in all, kindergarten straddles the two "worlds" of early childhood. Long considered a transition into formal schooling, kindergarten programs have been the center of much current controversy. Should they be structured more like preschool or more like the elementary grades? Traditionally, more similar to the former than to the latter, today's kindergarten programs vary greatly, depending on the philosophy of the school or district. Awareness that many children have previously attended early education programs and concern about children's subsequent school success have resulted in increasingly adult-centered, academic kindergarten programs (Gallant, 2009; Kostelnik & Grady, 2009; Moore, 2010). This trend has ignited renewed debate, not yet resolved, about the true function of kindergarten and its role in children's lives. It also has spawned new early childhood programs such as state-funded pre-K classrooms.

The program variations just described are implemented by a large group of practitioners trained to work with young children. Let us briefly consider how people become early childhood professionals and what distinguishes a professional from an amateur.

TABLE 2 Early Childhood Education Programs for Children Ages 3–8 Years

Program	Children Served	Ages	Purposes	Funding
Early Head Start	Pregnant women, infants, and toddlers from low-income families	Prenatal to 3 years	Promote healthy pregnancies and enhance child development of very young children	Federal
Head Start	Children from low-income families and children with disabilities	3–4 years	Comprehensive early education, health, nutrition and medical services, parent involvement	Federal
Private preschools	Mostly middle class	2–5 years	Enrichment and school readiness experiences	Parent tuition

TABLE 2 *Continued*

Program	Children Served	Ages	Purposes	Funding
Parent cooperative preschools	Children of participating parents	2–5 years	Enrichment and school readiness experiences as well as parent education	Parent tuition and in-kind support from families
Faith-based preschools	Children of church, temple, or mosque members	2–5 years	Educational experiences and spiritual training	Church subsidies and parent tuition
State sponsored pre-K programs	Children identified as at risk for economic, developmental, or environmental reasons; in some states, all 4-year-olds whose parents wish to enroll them	4 years	Development of readiness skills for future schooling	State taxes and special allocations
Group child-care homes (varies across states)	All	6 weeks to 12 years	Comprehensive care of children, covering all aspects of development	Varies; sources include employer subsidies; parent tuition; state agencies; the federal government by means of Title XX funds, the USDA Child Care Food Program, and child-care tax credits; and private and charitable organizations.
Family child-care homes (varies across states, ranges from 6–8 or fewer children and one provider)	All	6 weeks to 12 years	Comprehensive care of children, covering all aspects of development	Varies; sources include employer subsidies; parent tuition; state agencies; and the federal government by means of Title XX funds, the USDA Child Care Food Program, and child-care tax credits; and private and charitable organizations.
Center-based child-care	All	6 weeks to 12 years	Comprehensive care, addressing all areas of development, includes full-day and part-time care	Varies; sources include employer subsidies; parent tuition; state agencies; and the federal government by means of Title XX funds, the USDA Child Care Food Program, and child-care tax credits; and private and charitable organizations.
Title I	Children who are educationally disadvantaged (poor, migrants, disabled, neglected, or delinquent)	4–12 years	Supplemental education for children and parents	Federal funds
Kindergarten	All	5–6 years	Introduction to formal schooling	State and local taxes or, in the case of private schools, parent tuition
First, second, and third grade	All	6–8 years	Transmission of society's accumulated knowledge, values, beliefs, and customs to the young	State and local taxes or, in the case of private schools, parent tuition

Becoming an Early Childhood Professional

- ◆ *When Scott arrived at Lakeland College, he majored in business administration. After taking some classes, he realized business was not his forte, but he had no clear idea of what he wanted to do. One afternoon he went with some friends to help supervise a Halloween party for kindergartners at the local YMCA. He had a great time with the children. They were fun and so smart. After several more experiences with children at the Y, Scott decided to talk to his adviser about the school's major in early childhood education.*
- ◆ *Jackie is the mother of three children. When she began working in a Head Start classroom as a parent volunteer, she became intrigued with preschoolers' development and learning in*