Who Am I in the Lives of Children?

An Introduction to Early Childhood Education

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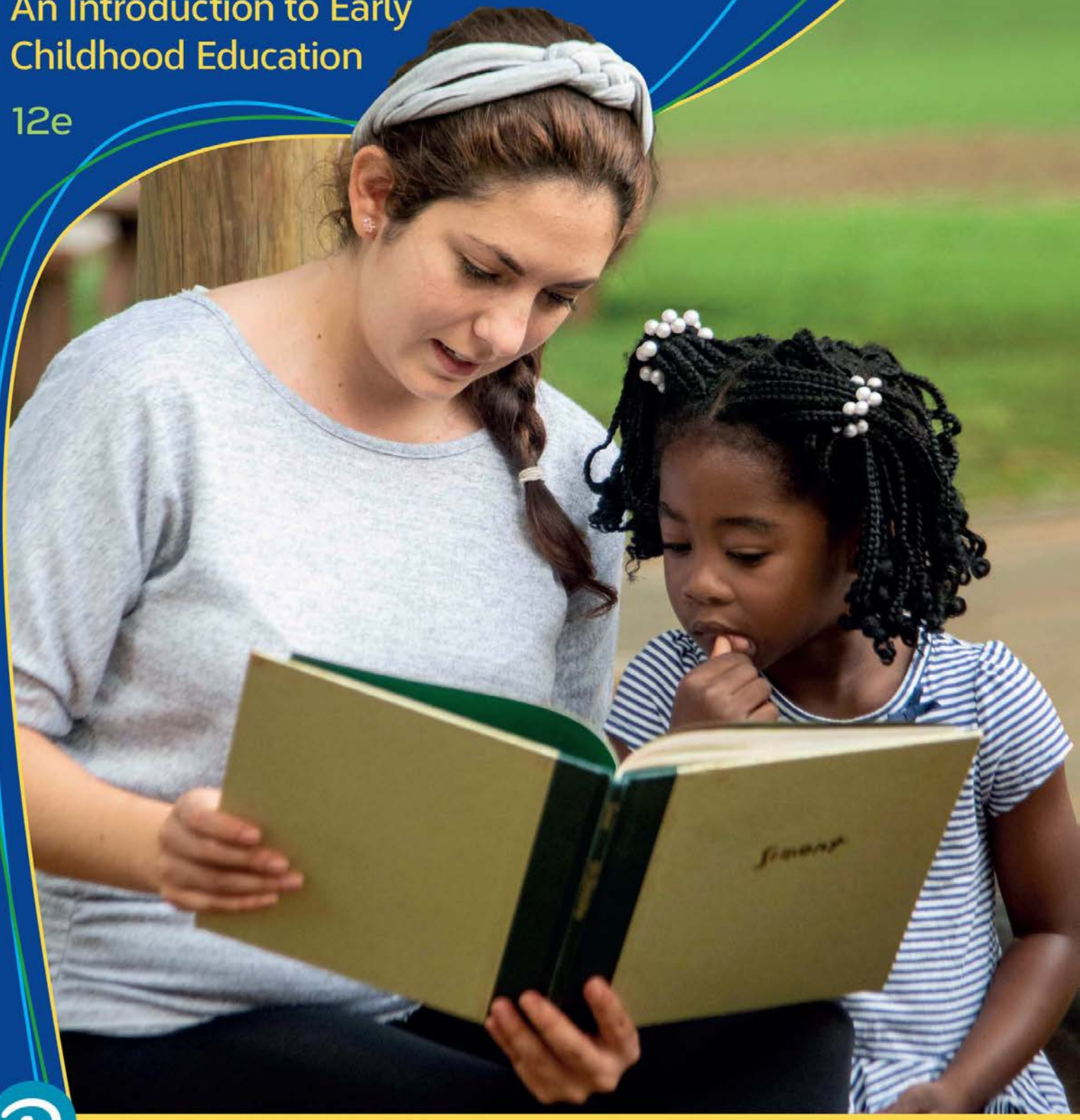

Stephanie Feeney | Eva Moravcik | Sherry Nolte

TWELFTH EDITION

Who Am I in the Lives of Children?

An Introduction to Early Childhood Education

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A Letter to Readers

Dear Reader:

Welcome to the twelfth edition of *Who Am I in the Lives of Children? An Introduction to Early Childhood Education*. Our purpose in writing this book is to engage your interest in learning about young children and their families and to support you as you begin your education journey. We are passionate about this work and hope that as you read this text you will begin to share our enthusiasm for and dedication to early childhood education.

We feel strongly that for you to become a skilled early childhood teacher, you must develop your own style and a professional philosophy that reflects your values and guides your actions. Your journey will be an exciting one—a venture that will be shaped by your unique experiences, values, and beliefs and by the knowledge and skills you build along the way. We encourage you to take time to reflect on what you know and value about young children and their families and how you see your role as an early childhood teacher. There is much to learn about this field; our knowledge about it grows and evolves continuously. It is not possible to include everything you might need to know in this book. Rather, we offer you information that we think will be helpful as you begin your studies and your career. We strive to provide a lens through which to view knowledge, ideas, and the many choices you will make in your work with young children and with their families. We are confident that as you reflect on your attitudes and beliefs, learn about young children, and build your skills for teaching them, you will find both satisfaction and joy in participating in the important work of the early childhood teacher.

About the Authors

When we read a book, we like to know about the authors—who they are and why they wrote the book. We want to share some of that information with you.

This book grows out of our experiences as children, as adults, as learners, and as teachers. Our early schooling included experiences in child-oriented nursery schools much like those we describe in this book, as well as in large public schools, private schools, and a small multinational school. Although our childhood experiences were different, our values are similar, and we have many of the same ideas about education. We each have long held a strong commitment to ensuring that all children experience programs that are nurturing and challenging, that support all aspects of their development, and that welcome their families as partners.

SOURCE: Jeff Reese

Stephanie Feeney, Eva Moravcik, and Sherry Nolte

Among us we have filled the roles of preschool teacher, social worker, kindergarten teacher, center director, education coordinator, parent and child center program director, consultant, parent educator, CDA trainer, Head Start regional training officer, college professor, and author. We have worked in parent cooperatives, child care centers, preschools, infant–toddler programs, Head Start programs, military child development programs, public schools, government agencies, and college settings. We have been board members of our local and national early childhood organizations; we have been and continue to be child advocates.

Stephanie first conceptualized and authored this book in 1977, during her long and respected tenure as a professor of early childhood education at the University of Hawai'i. She is now retired and lives in Portland, Oregon, where she continues to write and teach about ethics and professionalism. While not directly revising chapters for this edition, Stephanie has edited our work and made valuable suggestions for clarity and usefulness of the content. Her vision for this text remains the guiding force for this revision.

Eva is a professor at Honolulu Community College, where she teaches courses and coordinates a small child development lab school. Her daily work with children, family, staff, and college students continues to provide her with grounding in the reality of life in a program for young children. In addition to her professional activities, she has a long-time interest in folk music and dance and coordinates a small recreational folk-dance group in Honolulu.

Sherry brings extensive experience working in programs for military families, low-income children, and infants and toddlers. She has retired from her position as a professor at Honolulu Community College, where she taught early childhood courses and supervised practicum students for more than 20 years. She continues to work as an early childhood consultant and trainer.

About the Book: A Child-Centered Approach

We began writing *Who Am I in the Lives of Children?* because we wanted an introductory text consistent with our belief that the personal and professional development of early childhood teachers are inextricably linked. We wanted students to take time to reflect on values and educational choices—an approach that was not common at the time. In this edition, as in all of the previous ones, we emphasize the development of personal awareness and the ongoing process of reflection on values and choices. Then and now, we want to speak to you, our readers, in as clear a way as possible; therefore, we write in an informal, direct, and personal voice. Like the previous eleven editions, this one evolved as we gleaned new information from our reading and our experiences.

The *whole child* or *child-centered* approach to early childhood education is the cornerstone of this book and the foundation for our work with children. This approach has its roots in a long tradition of humanistic and progressive education and in the unique history and philosophy of our field. Many early childhood programs today have evolved from this *child-centered* tradition. They are characterized by a deep respect for the individual and the recognition that individual differences need to be honored in educational settings. They reflect the understanding that children learn best from direct experience and spontaneous play. Educators in child-centered programs see each child as a member of a family, a community, and a society. They focus on getting to know each person's strengths, interests, challenges, and circumstances; and they work to ensure that the learning opportunities they provide are in harmony with the needs of each child and family.

In this edition, we continue to affirm our values and commitment to a respectful, culturally sensitive, child-centered, and family-friendly approach to working with young children. Over the years, it has become clear to us that this approach is broader than just a way of viewing early childhood education—it is an approach to working with people of all ages, to learning at all stages, and to life. We are excited to welcome you to this field and hope your experiences using this text will support your growth as a teacher who embraces a child-centered approach to learning and who delights in the many joys of spending time with young children.

Our Vision for You

Many approaches can be taken in teaching others to work with young children. It is not our intention for everyone to come to the same conclusions or to work with children in the same way. In this book, we want to help you discover who you are as a teacher and what you value for children instead of focusing exclusively on the content and skills you will be learning. Like creating a clay figure in which each part is drawn out of a central core, we strive to support you in making your work an integral part of who you are. A figurine constructed by sticking head, arms, and legs onto a ball of clay often falls apart when exposed to the heat of the fire. Similarly, a teacher who does not have clear educational values and whose knowledge consists of bits and pieces may fall apart when faced with the reality of the classroom.

You will play an important part in the lives of the children and families with whom you will work. We hope this twelfth edition of *Who Am I in the Lives of Children?* will

help you become a competent, nurturing, and reflective teacher as well as a person who is committed to being an advocate for young children.

New to This Edition

The revision was mostly created during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. As COVID invaded every aspect of our lives and changed our routines, our relationships, and our understandings about the world, it is only natural that our thinking about children, families, and early childhood education was colored by our pandemic experiences. Consequently, throughout this revision you will find discussion of how the COVID crisis has impacted our current practices and our understanding of the best ways to develop and maintain programs that meet the needs of young children and their families. The following changes have also been included in this edition:

- **Alignment with NAEYC's most recent Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (2020).** Each chapter lists the standards that are addressed by the content of the chapter. This encourages students to become aware of the standards and of the ways that they apply to their learning. It also allows faculty to demonstrate how their courses align with these standards.
- **Focus on Equity.** In this edition, care has been taken to ensure that discussion is inclusive of a variety of perspectives and of issues affecting all people, particularly people of color; people from non-White, nonaffluent backgrounds; those who have immigrated to the United States; people with disabilities, and people with non-traditional gender identities. An *Including All Children* feature has been added in some chapters. Here are some other examples:
  - Chapter 3 includes revised discussion of the history of the field of early childhood education and contributions by non-White individuals.
  - In Chapter 6 we have added a new section on gender that discusses gender identity and strategies for promoting acceptance of diverse gender roles in the early childhood classroom.
  - Biases, and their impact on teacher views about children, families, and teaching practices, are discussed in Chapters 1, 7, and 13.
- ***In Practice* Feature.** Many chapters include bulleted lists that summarize ways teachers can put the chapter's content into practice in their classrooms.
- **Vignettes.** These short stories about children and teachers have been revised to be more contemporary and in this edition are written in past tense to match the anecdotal record structure described in Chapter 5 and used in many early childhood programs.
- **Updated References.** References and content have been updated to include newer research and writing about early childhood topics.

Key Content Updates by Chapter

Chapter 1 includes a new table listing important terms in the field along with revised definitions, making it easy for students to understand and use common early childhood terms; a new graphic on temperament includes information about adult temperamental traits; a revised table clarifies the roles and requirements needed to work in programs with young children; and a new section on professional boundaries has been added.

Chapter 2 contains new figures clarifying typical state licensing requirements for early childhood education programs, which children receive care and education and what those programs are called. It includes discussion of the NAEYC foundational

documents—Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators, Code of Ethical Conduct, Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education, NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards, and Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), and has an added section on equitable, coherent early learning systems.

Chapter 3 contains revised figures with new illustrations that highlight the work of historical thinkers and educators; included are new four color illustrations of historical figures and new sections on the contributions to the field by people of color as well as a new section on the history of early childhood education in the second half of the 20th century.

Chapter 4 includes vignettes that have been rewritten to be more inclusive; a new section on dual language learners, including a table illustrating the development of second language acquisition; and in the resilience section, new information about the role of toxic stress and ACEs (adverse childhood experiences). Finally, an *In Practice* Feature, Building Resilience, has been added.

Chapter 5 incorporates a new *Ethical Responsibility* reflection; a new section on learning stories with an *In Practice* feature—How to Write a Learning Story; and expanded discussion on portfolio systems and a link to an example of a digital portfolio. In addition, vignettes have been updated and revised to illustrate appropriate anecdotal record structure.

Chapter 6 expands its focus on diversity and bias with a new section on gender identity, including an *In Practice* box, Promote Acceptance of Diverse Gender Roles; a new *Reflect On*, Your Biases Related to Children's Behavior; and an *Including All Children* feature, Family Practices Influence Children's Behavior in Early Childhood Programs. A new section called Trauma and Toxic Stress incorporates figures clarifying ACEs and toxic stress as well as resources for trauma -informed care, along with a new *Ethical Dilemma* reflection on challenging behavior.

Chapter 7 has a new section discussing ways to care for children during a pandemic or time of rapidly spreading illness with a new related *Ethical Dilemma* reflection; an *In Practice* feature, Ways to Encourage Health and Wellness and Lower Obesity Risk; and an updated section on screen and digital media use.

Chapter 8 adds a discussion of strategies for teaching online preschool and new features, *Including All Children, In Practice*: Ways to Include the Aesthetics of Joy in the Learning Environment, and *In Practice*: Pets in the Classroom; also added is an *Ethical Dilemma* reflection related to classroom environment.

Chapter 9 has a revised discussion of the stages of play with a new stages of play table and new *In Practice* features, Supportive Attitudes Toward Children's Play and Examples of Play Tutoring; also added are two new *Ethical Dilemma* reflections that encourage thoughtful understanding of the role of play in the early childhood classroom.

Chapter 10 adds a discussion of updated core considerations of developmentally appropriate practice; a new *In Practice* feature, Teaching Language Informally; a new *Ethical Dilemma* reflection related to curriculum; and a new figure showing a book written by a 5-year-old and another explaining ways to build a creative climate in the classroom.

Chapter 11 includes an expanded discussion of the curriculum planning terms, aims, goals, and objectives, clarified in a new table; and two new *In Practice* features, Organizing for Small Groups and A Process for Generating Big Ideas for an Integrated Study, have been added.

Chapter 12 has an updated title, *Including Children with Disabilities* (formerly *Including All Children*), and substantially updated content, including more accurate definitions of terms, particularly *disability, inclusion, identity first language, person first language*, and *typically developing children;* a number of new tables and figures have been created to illustrate important content, including the referral process, early intervention versus special education, the continuum of placement, questions to help distinguish cultural differences from disabilities, children's books with positive depictions of disability, and some characteristics you might observe in children with disabilities. Also added are two new features—*In Practice*, Talking with Children About Disabilities, and *Golden Rules*, Welcoming a Child with Disabilities.

Chapter 13 has updated content on communicating with families from diverse backgrounds; a new *In Practice* feature includes updated information on family engagement practices; and a new figure offers resources that families can access related to dealing with the impacts of COVID-19.

Chapter 14 has been revised to be more readable and accessible for beginning students to help them focus on planning their professional goals and becoming committed to the field of early childhood education.

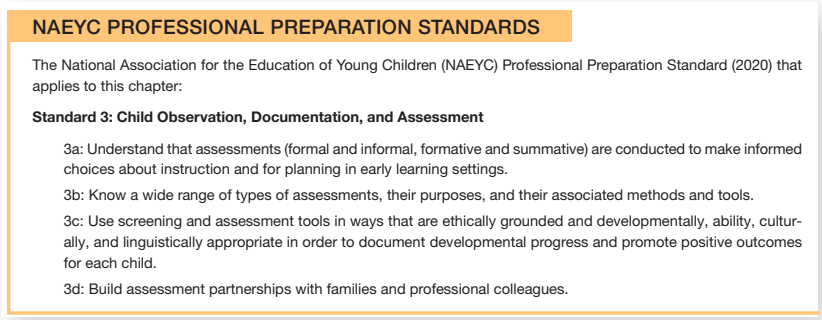
Appendix C, *Recognizing and Supporting Children with Disabilities*, is a new appendix that summarizes characteristics of many disabilities and provides suggestions for successfully including children with these particular needs into the early childhood classroom.

What Is Special About *Who Am I in the Lives of Children?*

The pedagogical features described below are grouped around the three prominent themes of the book. These features are meant to provide you with practical guidance and direction for when you are working with young children.

Growing and Learning as an Early Childhood Educator:

NAEYC Professional Preparations Standards are referenced at the beginning of every chapter to encourage you to relate your learning to the standards in the field.


NAEYC PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION STANDARDS

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Preparation Standard (2020) that applies to this chapter:

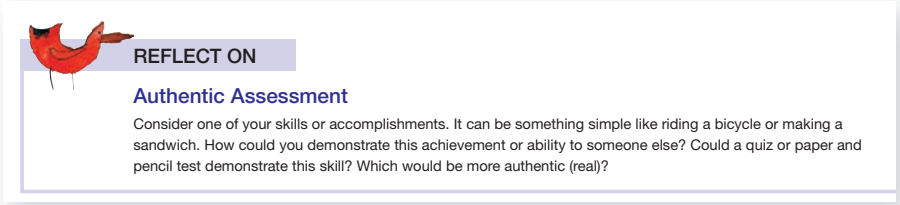
Standard 3: Child Observation, Documentation, and Assessment

3a: Understand that assessments (formal and informal, formative and summative) are conducted to make informed choices about instruction and for planning in early learning settings.

3b: Know a wide range of types of assessments, their purposes, and their associated methods and tools.

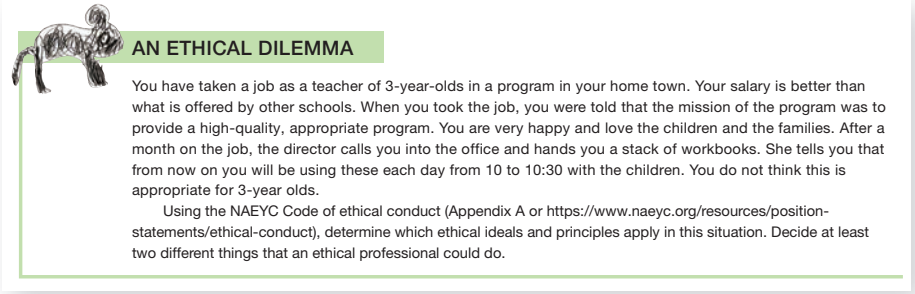
3c: Use screening and assessment tools in ways that are ethically grounded and developmentally, ability, culturally, and linguistically appropriate in order to document developmental progress and promote positive outcomes for each child.

3d: Build assessment partnerships with families and professional colleagues.



Reflect On features are included throughout the book to invite you to reflect on your values, beliefs, and experiences and how these relate to the readings in the text.

An Ethical Dilemma Each chapter includes one or several mini-cases or examples of an issue/problem that might arise in an early childhood setting and that requires an ethical decision. You are encouraged to use the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct to reflect on ways the code applies to the situation and possible ways to resolve the issue using the code as a guide.


AN ETHICAL DILEMMA

You have taken a job as a teacher of 3-year-olds in a program in your home town. Your salary is better than what is offered by other schools. When you took the job, you were told that the mission of the program was to provide a high-quality, appropriate program. You are very happy and love the children and the families. After a month on the job, the director calls you into the office and hands you a stack of workbooks. She tells you that from now on you will be using these each day from 10 to 10:30 with the children. You do not think this is appropriate for 3-year olds.

Using the NAEYC Code of ethical conduct (Appendix A or https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/ethical-conduct), determine which ethical ideals and principles apply in this situation. Decide at least two different things that an ethical professional could do.

FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

Document your skill and knowledge of observing and assessing young children by adding to your professional portfolio:

- A narrative observation you have written with a short statement describing how you used or might use the information from this observation to meet this child's needs.
- An annotated work sample or photogram with a short statement describing how you used or might use this to meet this child's needs.
- A structured observation you completed on a child or group of children with a short statement describing how you used or might use the information to meet children's needs.

For Your Professional Portfolio suggestions are placed at the very end of each chapter. They provide suggestions for creating or collecting artifacts related to the chapter content that you can use to prepare and place in your professional portfolios and show to potential employers.

Understanding and Using a Child-Centered Approach

Golden Rules offer an accessible summary of principles and practices related to the chapter content.

GOLDEN RULES

for Writing Anecdotal Records

1. Write after you observe a typical behavior or interaction.
2. Write after you observe a new behavior or interaction.
3. Write after you observe an unusual behavior or interaction.
4. Describe what happened. Include only what you saw, heard, or otherwise experienced through your senses. Avoid generalizations (*always*, *usually*, *never*).
5. Omit the words *I* and *me* unless the child spoke those words (remember that the observation is about the child, not you).
6. Refrain from saying why you think the child behaved or interacted in this way.
7. Exclude your opinions of the child, the behavior, or interaction (remember, it's not about you).
8. Leave out your feelings about what happened.
9. Write a separate comment that explains why you thought this behavior or interaction was important to record and what you think it might mean in terms of this child's development and program goals for children.
10. Keep anecdotal records confidential.

IN PRACTICE

Some Strategies for Teaching While Children Play

- **Intentionally wait.** Allow children time for purposeful play, mindful struggle, and independent discovery.
- **Observe** and make notes while children are playing, to inform your planning.
- **Play** with children to build relationships and help them develop play skills. Model how to play (how to use toys, take on roles, support other players). Sensitively join the play without taking it over or interfering.
- **Acknowledge and encourage** children who are working on a skill. Physically or verbally acknowledge them and encourage them to persevere.
- **Scaffold** (support) children as they develop a skill or concept during play by physically or verbally helping them only as much as they need. As a child acquires a skill or concept, gradually withdraw assistance until the child is able to be independent.
- **Adjust the challenge.** Be alert to the signs that a child needs a different (harder or easier) challenge. If a toy is misused, if children destroy or walk away from their work, or if a child finishes a project without thought or attention, it may be that the level is wrong.

SOURCE: Based on information from E. Moravcik & S. Nolte, *Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children* (2nd ed.), Pearson, 2018.

NEW! In Practice features offer practical suggestions for engaging children in classroom activities, routines, and interactions.

Vignettes Embedded in the running text in many chapters are stories that provide authentic observations of children's behavior. Vignettes are written following guidelines for creating anecdotal records.

Dealing with Conflict

> *In the pretend area Vivian was dancing, wearing sparkly dress-up shoes. Nadia said, "I want to wear the Elsa shoes!" Vivian declared, "I'm dancing—you can't use them." "But I really, really need them!" Nadia cried, tugging at Vivian's dress. Vivian fell down. Now both Vivian and Nadia were crying.*

Figure 10.6 Caterpillar on a Crown Flower Leaf

SOURCE: Reprinted with permission from Kapua Kawelo.

Children's Artifacts Artifacts children have created, such as drawings, paintings, and stories, are embedded in the text as figures.

Partnering with Families

Connecting with Families features provide practical ideas for developing and maintaining good relationships with parents and other family members of young students in early childhood settings.

CONNECTING WITH FAMILIES

Sharing Portfolios

All families want to know how their child is growing and learning, so in most early childhood programs, conferences are used to regularly report on a child's progress. Families have an important role. They are not merely "the audience" to whom you present a portfolio. They have valuable contributions to make. Invite families to participate in tangible ways. Have families tell the child's story, describe what the child was like last year, and share who the child is in the family today. You might want to design a questionnaire for incoming families to complete to include in a portfolio. After the conference, write a short report with a summary of decisions made at the conference and add this to the child's portfolio.

INCLUDING ALL CHILDREN

Family Practices Influence Children's Behavior in Early Childhood Programs

What Families May Do at Home	How Children May Respond at School	Some Ways to Honor This Difference
Give directions; discourage or forbid questions	Confused when you ask them to make choices	Offer two options: "Do you want red or yellow paper?"
Require unquestioning obedience	Unwilling to express personal wants or to ask questions	Describe what you think a child may be wondering: "It looks like you are wondering why he had the first turn."
	Test limits often	Expect limit testing; be patient. Point out that home and school expectations can be different: "Sometimes we do things differently at school than at home. That can be confusing."
Expect children to ask questions Encourage children to make independent decisions	Question adult decisions and reasons Take initiative; may seem to "get into everything"	Explain reasons for the decisions that you make: "Children cannot use these large scissors because they may hurt themselves. Adults have larger hands and can control the scissors better." Offer many opportunities for exploration; encourage curiosity.
Use discipline that is harsh and may include spanking or other kinds of physical punishment	Appear to ignore or disregard verbal requests	Make eye contact and ensure that the child is attending when giving verbal directions. Ask the child to restate your words so you can check for comprehension: "Tell me what I said that I need you to do next."
Have very few limits for or expectations of young children	Distressed or confused when told "no" by adults	Clearly explain reasons. Stay with children while they follow through with requests: "I know you don't want to go inside yet. It's lunchtime now. I'll hold your hand, and we will walk in together."

NEW! Including All Children provides information to help you build relationships with children and families from diverse circumstances and backgrounds.

Learning Management System (LMS)–Compatible Assessment Bank, and Other Instructor Resources

LMS-Compatible Assessment Bank

With this new edition, all assessment types—quizzes and application exercises—are included in LMS-compatible banks for the following learning management systems: Blackboard (9780137523757), Canvas (9780137523771), D2L (9780137523795), and Moodle (9780137523818). These packaged files allow maximum flexibility to instructors when it comes to importing, assigning, and grading. Assessment types include:

- **Learning Outcome Quizzes** Each chapter learning outcome is the focus of a Learning Outcome Quiz that is available for instructors to assign through their Learning Management System. Learning outcomes identify chapter content that is most important for learners and serve as the organizational framework for each chapter. The higher order, multiple-choice questions in each quiz will measure your understanding of chapter content, guide the expectations for your learning, and inform the accountability and the applications of your new knowledge. Each multiple-choice question includes feedback for the correct answer and for each distractor to further guide your learning.
- **Application Exercises** Each chapter provides opportunities to apply what you have learned through Application Exercises.

. When used in the LMS environment, a model response written by experts is provided after you submit the exercise. This feedback helps guide your learning and can assist your instructor in grading.

- **Chapter Tests** Suggested test items are provided for each chapter. When used in the LMS environment, the multiple-choice questions are automatically graded, and model responses are provided for short-answer and essay questions.

Instructor's Manual (9780137523825)

The Instructor's Manual is provided as a Word document and includes resources to assist professors in planning their course. These resources consist of learning outcomes, chapter overviews, and guidance for promoting concept development through various teaching activities, questions for discussion, and course forms. Suggested information is provided to help create thoughtful professionals who become self-motivated and accountable, able to evaluate themselves and to be evaluated, and to learn and grow from these processes

PowerPoint® Slides (9780137523832)

PowerPoint® slides are provided for each chapter and highlight key concepts and summarize the content of the text to make it more meaningful for students. Often, these slides also include questions and problems designed to stimulate discussion and to encourage students to elaborate and deepen their understanding of chapter topics.

Note: All instructor resources—the LMS-Compatible Assessment Bank, the Instructor's Manual, and the PowerPoint slides—are available for download at www.pearsonhighered.com. Use one of the following methods:

- From the main page, use the search function to look up the lead author or the title. Select the desired search result, then access the "Resources" tab to view and download all available resources.
- From the main page, use the search function to look up the ISBN (provided above) of the specific instructor resource you would like to download. When the product page loads, access the "Downloadable Resources" tab.

Acknowledgments

We have been writing and revising *Who Am I in the Lives of Children?* since 1977, and during that time we have been influenced and supported by many colleagues, friends, and students. Our list of individuals to acknowledge continues to grow, as does our gratitude.

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Our students in the early childhood/elementary education program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and the early childhood program at Honolulu Community College have asked thought-provoking questions and given us insight into the viewpoints of the future educator.

Like you, we learn by doing. Our attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills have developed as we have worked with the children, families, and staff at programs in Hawai'i: the Leeward Community College Children's Center, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Children's Center, and the Early School.

We would also like to thank the reviewers of this edition for their insights and comments: Melissa Geiselhofer, Fresno City College; Rebecca M. Giles, University of South Alabama; Raquel Ochs, University of Central Missouri; and Alethea Rollins, Arizona State University.

This book is brought to life through the photographs, children's art, and videos that illustrate each chapter. Most of the images of young children are the work of Jeffrey Reese, a talented photographer who took photographs for this and the previous eight editions. The pictures were taken in Hawai'i at the Leeward Community College Children's Center, the Keiki Hauoli Children's Center at Honolulu Community College, and at Keiki Steps on the Wai'anae Coast of O'ahu; in Oregon at South Coast Head Start in Coos Bay and at Helen Gordon Child Development Center in Portland. Some of the videos were taken by Steve Bobilin, talented videographer and former education specialist at Honolulu Community College. The children's artwork that adds such vibrancy to the book is the work of the children of Leeward Community College Children's Center; it would not exist were it not for their talented teachers, Jackie Rabang and Rodena Akiu. We appreciate the cooperation of the children, staff, and families of these schools.

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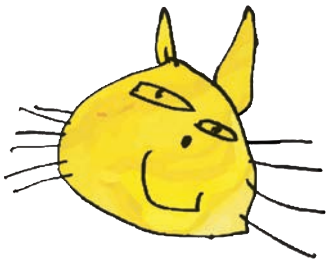

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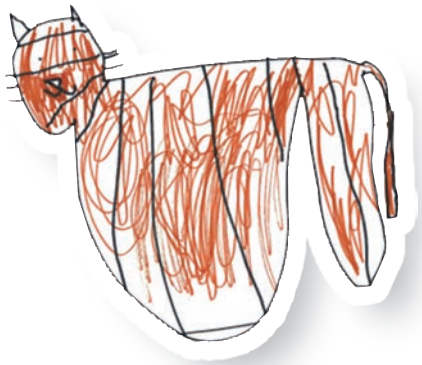


Chapter 1
The Teacher

SOURCE: Jeff Reese

We teach who we are.

JOHN GARDNER

Learning Outcomes

1.1 Define early childhood education and identify the professional roles and the most important tasks that characterize the work of the early childhood educator.

1.2 Discuss the importance of teachers' personal attributes, both those that are inborn and those that are learned from culture, family, and community.

1.3 Demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be a professional, with emphasis on the role of morality and ethics.

1.4 Describe educational pathways that are appropriate to a variety of career goals and identify some that you think might be appropriate for you.

NAEYC PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION STANDARDS

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Preparation Standard (2020) that applies to this chapter:

Standard 6: Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

6a: Identify and involve themselves with the early childhood field and serve as informed advocates for young children, families, and the profession.

6b: Know about and uphold ethical and other early childhood professional guidelines.

6c: Use professional communication skills, including technology mediated strategies, to effectively support young children's learning and development and to work with families and colleagues.

6d: Engage in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.

6e: Develop and sustain the habit of reflective and intentional practice in their daily work with young children.

Welcome to the Field of Early Childhood Education!

Learning Outcome 1.1 **Define early childhood education and identify the professional roles and the most important tasks that characterize the work of the early childhood educator.**

You are embarking on the important career of educating and caring for young children. Who you are as a person and the kind of professional you become will have a lasting impact on children, families, and society. The purpose of this book is to help you become an educator who can nurture the growth of young children, support their families, work amicably with colleagues, advocate for children and families, and, in the future, make your own distinctive contributions to early childhood education.

This first chapter will help you understand what constitutes early childhood education, what early childhood educators call the places where they work and the job titles they hold. It will also give you an overview of the work they do. We want you to understand what it means to be an early childhood teacher and help you to be aware of the range of different career options in early childhood education. Who you are as a person influences who you will become as a teacher, so we also want to help you to better understand yourself.

The process of learning more about yourself, about children, and about the field of early childhood education will help you to grow into a dedicated and skilled early childhood educator who can provide nurturing experiences that support the learning and development of young children. We hope that, as one of tomorrow's early childhood educators, you will make a commitment to providing high-quality experiences for young children and advocating for their rights and needs. This book is designed to help you acquire the skills, knowledge, and personal qualities you will need.

Some Definitions

We begin with some basic definitions because words create an image of who we are and what we do. (Review *Table 1.1: Early Childhood Definitions*.) **Early childhood** is the period in the life span that includes birth through age 8 (UNESCO, 2021). **Early childhood education** (often abbreviated as **ECE**) refers to education and care provided in all settings for children between birth and age 8. The term *early childhood education*

Table 1.1 Early Childhood Definitions

Before- and after-school programs—care for children in elementary school before and after the regular school day

Child care center—a full day program for children under age 5

Child development center—full- or part-day program for children under age 5

Early childhood caregiver—a person who provides education and care for young children in any setting, usually with children under the age of 2

Early childhood educator—a person who provides education and care for young children in any setting

Early childhood practitioner—a person who provides education and care for young children in any setting

Family child care provider—a person who provides education and care for young children in their home

Family–child interaction program—a program for young children and their families

Home-visitor program—a program in which an early childhood educator provides education to children and parents in the child's home

Kindergarten—the first year of formal schooling in the United States for 5- and 6-year-olds; in other countries, programs for children ages 3–6

Out of school care—care for children in elementary school before and after the regular school day and during school closures (holidays)

Prekindergarten (PreK)—a program for 4- and 5-year-olds generally housed in public schools

Preschool—a full- or part-day program for children under age 5

Primary grades—grades 1 through 3

Teacher—a person who has formal training and provides education and care for young children in any setting

Transitional kindergarten—(TK) a program for 4–5-year-olds generally housed in public schools (most often in California).

highlights the importance of education, brings our field into alignment with elementary and secondary education, and emphasizes what makes us unique—our field's focus on young children. Education programs are seen as worthy of respect, and the children who participate in them are viewed as learners. Our field is also referred to as **Early Childhood Education and Care** to emphasize the dual focus on learning and care that distinguishes our field and suggests that we help children learn in the context of caring relationships.

Because programs for children under age 5 are most often found in **preschools** and **child care centers**, while **kindergarten** through grade 3 programs are usually housed in elementary schools, it can be challenging to get a sense of early childhood education as a whole. As you construct your understanding of the field, it may be helpful to keep in mind that all programs for young children have the overarching purpose of supporting children's growth and development. No matter what they are called or where they are housed, all provide both care and education. People who work in early childhood programs, regardless of their job title or the age of the children, strive to support all aspects of children's development, promote learning, and provide nurture and care.

Many different terms are used to refer to those who are employed to educate and care for children between birth and age 8. We use **teacher** because it reflects the responsibilities of the early childhood educator, demonstrates respect, and is how both children and their families typically refer to the adults who care for and educate young children. The term *teacher* emphasizes the things that unite us as a group of people who work with children. It also is a term that the general public—people like your family and friends—will understand and with which they are likely to have positive associations. We call this chapter "The Teacher" because we believe it best reflects you and your career aspirations, whether you are considering working with infants or 8-year-olds.

The Work of an Early Childhood Educator

Working with young children is varied and challenging; it demands knowledge, skill, sensitivity, creativity, and hard work. If these challenges inspire you, you have probably chosen the right field. Early childhood education is especially rewarding if you enjoy the spontaneous teaching and learning opportunities that abound in daily life

SOURCE: Jeff Reese

with young children. It may not be as gratifying if you prefer dispensing subject matter or like work that is tidy and predictable. Sometimes, college students who begin their careers with visions of shaping young minds become discouraged when they discover how much of their time is spent mixing paint, changing pants, arbitrating disputes, mopping floors, and wiping noses. But while working with young children can be demanding and tiring, it can also be invigorating. You will get to have conversations with children, tell and read stories, sing, observe nature, explore neighborhoods, plant gardens, and provide inspiration for creative art, music, and movement. You will have the opportunity every day to plan and implement interesting and meaningful learning experiences. This wide range of tasks makes work with young children endlessly interesting and challenging. While your most important task as an early childhood educator is working with children, you will also interact with families, colleagues, and community agencies.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

> *Ruby, a teacher in a classroom of 3- and 4-year-olds, loves her work. She takes pride in her classroom and carefully arranged it. She knows her children and loves creating materials that appeal to them. Today Ruby's work included singing "I've Been Working on the Railroad" with the whole class, reading* The Book with No Pictures *to Cielo and Jasmine, bandaging Jhana's cut toe, helping Callie change her wet clothes, making pasta with her small group (the Fireflies), blowing bubbles for children to chase outside, negotiating a disagreement between Kaitlin and Vivi, helping Manuel identify the difference between a mastodon and a woolly mammoth, and rubbing children's backs as they went to sleep at naptime. After these and many other teaching moments, Ruby ended the day with hugs from 18 children. She is very happy.*

The first and most important of your tasks as an early childhood teacher is working with children. Your work will begin each day before the first child arrives and will continue after the last child has gone home. You will set the stage for learning by creating a safe, healthy, and stimulating environment. You will plan a schedule, create materials, and design learning experiences. You will engage in relationships with children and observe them carefully. You will model and teach skills, engage in playful interactions, and care for their physical and emotional needs. In a single day, you might be doing the work not only of a teacher but also of a nurse, secretary, parent, librarian, interior designer, janitor, counselor, entertainer, or diplomat.

Early childhood educators regard all areas of development—social, emotional, intellectual, and physical—as important and interconnected. As a teacher of young children, you will be called on to nurture and support all aspects of development. This is called *teaching the whole child*, and you will encounter this idea over and over. Care and education that is responsive to and based on research on children's development, the needs and characteristics of individual children, with awareness of children's family, **culture**, and community, is known as **developmentally appropriate practice (DAP)**, another idea central to early childhood education. The phrases *teaching the whole child* and *developmentally appropriate practice* are shorthand for the many things teachers do in educating and caring for young children.

Although teaching young children can, and should, be playful and joyful, it must also be **intentional**, in other words, purposeful. Every time you design an activity, change the environment, or interact with a child you will have a reason for what you do. An **intentional teacher** has goals for children's development, thinks through alternatives, and then decides on strategies to achieve these goals. To do this they must have

knowledge of child development and of **pedagogy** (how to teach). An important part of your teacher preparation will be learning to select appropriate teaching strategies and to articulate why you chose them in ways that can be understood by children's family members and your colleagues.

WORKING WITH FAMILIES

> *When the children arrived, Ruby greeted each of their parents by name. Tara, Joshua's mom, shared that Joshua had a nightmare and cried about a big kid scaring him. She asked Ruby to watch in case he was being bullied. Emi's dad asked Ruby to make sure Emi's clothes stayed clean because they were picking up Grandma after school. Manuel's mom handed Ruby a survey that Ruby had given her the previous week. Greyson's mom cried as she said goodbye to Greyson and pushed him into Ruby's arms. During the day, Ruby sent Greyson's Mom pictures of Greyson happily painting at the easel. Each of the 18 family members dropping off a child in this classroom had a brief interaction with Ruby or one of the other teachers.*

You probably chose early childhood education because you enjoy young children. When you first begin to teach, you may be surprised at the extent to which you will work with families. Young children live in, and cannot be separated from, their families. Working with family members is an inseparable part of your role as an early childhood educator. Because early childhood programs often provide the child's first experience in the larger world away from home, you will play an important role in the transition between home and school—helping families and children learn to be apart from one another for a period of time each day. A close, respectful partnership between home and teacher is important in all programs for young children and absolutely essential in those for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Just as your work with children brings with it diverse roles and demands, your work with families involves a range of attitudes and skills that are both similar to and different from those you need in your work with children. Families take many forms. Your work will require you to be open to the range of differences that exist among families (blended, extended, same-sex, etc.). When working with families, you may find yourself acting as a consultant, a social worker, an advocate, a teacher, a reporter, a librarian, a mediator, a translator, and a social director. Like the varied roles you engage in when teaching, this is another way that your job will be engaging and challenging.

Working as Part of a Team

A third important aspect of your role as a teacher is working collaboratively with other adults as part of a team. Although the extent to which you will participate in teamwork varies from setting to setting, no early childhood educator works completely alone.

> *Ruby came in an hour early on the day her new teaching partner, Michelle, was scheduled to begin. She brought a thermos of coffee, some home-made muffins, and a bouquet of flowers to welcome Michelle. Michelle arrived a few minutes before the children. She was a little taken aback when presented with the flowers. She hung up her jacket, gulped down the coffee, ate a muffin, and gave Ruby a big hug, leaving the flowers on the counter. Ruby felt a little uncomfortable with the hug and was a bit annoyed by the abandoned flowers. Ruby asked Michelle to supervise the playground while she prepped the classroom and put the flowers in a vase. She took a few minutes to put up a new art poster, arrange translucent beads on the light table, and set up the dolls around the table in the dramatic play center. When she arrived outside, Ruby was delighted to see Michelle playing guitar as the children danced. When they went inside, Michelle was amazed at the transformation of the classroom into a place of beauty and learning. By the end of the week Ruby and Michelle had developed a rhythm to their partnership. Ruby appreciated Michelle's musical skills and ability to connect with children. Michelle was impressed by Ruby's organization, thoughtfulness, and gentle guidance. At the end of each day, they talked about how to better meet the needs of their class of children.*

The ability to work productively on a team is an essential skill for an early childhood educator. In almost every setting, you will work with other staff members daily and interact with program administrators regularly. You may supervise volunteers and work with a host of other adults, ranging from custodians to counselors. You might also communicate with people in agencies concerned with children and families (such as child welfare workers and early intervention specialists).

Participating in a team can give you support, stimulation, and a sense of belonging. In effective teams, people work together on behalf of a shared goal (Mecan & Roger, 2000). They make the best use of one another's strengths and abilities. They are colleagues. Being a good colleague and effective team member involves more than just turning up for work. It means understanding your role, fulfilling your responsibilities, and doing your share (or more) of the work. It means treating others with respect, honoring diverse values and communication styles, and supporting one another. It requires honest self-reflection and the insight that you do have faults. Perhaps most important, it means communicating effectively and striving to resolve the conflicts that inevitably occur when people work together every day. The teachers of young children who do this well are also the happiest and most effective.

REFLECT ON

Your Ideas About Early Childhood Teachers*

What do you see in your mind when you think of a teacher of young children? What is the teacher like? What is the teacher doing? (Keep a copy of your response so you can refer to it later in this course or program.)

*This is the first of many reflections that you will find in this book. Thinking about the questions asked and writing down your ideas will help you to become a reflective teacher of young children. You may find it useful to record your answers to these reflection questions in a notebook or journal so that you can look back on them and think about your growth as you learn more about early childhood education and about yourself as a teacher.

The Teacher as a Person

Learning Outcome 1.2 **Discuss the importance of teachers' personal attributes, both those that are inborn and those that are learned from culture, family, and community.**

Who you are as a person forms the foundation for the professional you will become. Your personal characteristics and experiences, training, and professional experiences provide the foundation for your evolving professional identity. We begin our exploration of the role of the teacher by looking at personal characteristics that are desirable in teachers of young children and ask you to take a thoughtful look at who you are.

SOURCE: Jeff Reese

Personality includes our perceptions, memories, and emotions" (Mayer, 2017). There is no one "right" personality type that produces a good teacher of young children. A combination of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and personal qualities contributes to the ability to work effectively with young children. The *In Practice: Personality Attributes That Promote Effective Work with Children* feature provides a list of characteristics common to successful early childhood educators.

Who you are as a person has a strong and lasting impact on your career as a teacher. People with a wide range of personal **attributes** can be effective as teachers of young children. Genuine liking and respect for children, paired with a caring nature and an inquiring mind and spirit, lead to a sense of commitment that can turn teaching young children from a job into a deeply held sense of mission, a **calling**.

IN PRACTICE

Personality Attributes That Promote Effective Work with Children

Successful early childhood educators have

- a positive outlook
- curiosity
- openness to new ideas
- enthusiasm
- commitment
- high energy
- physical strength
- a sense of humor
- flexibility
- self-awareness
- the capacity for empathy
- emotional stability
- warmth
- sensitivity
- passion
- perseverance
- willingness to take risks
- patience
- integrity (honesty and moral uprightness)
- creativity
- a love of learning

SOURCES: Cartwright, S. (1999). What makes good early childhood teachers? Young Children, 54(6), 46).

Personal Attributes

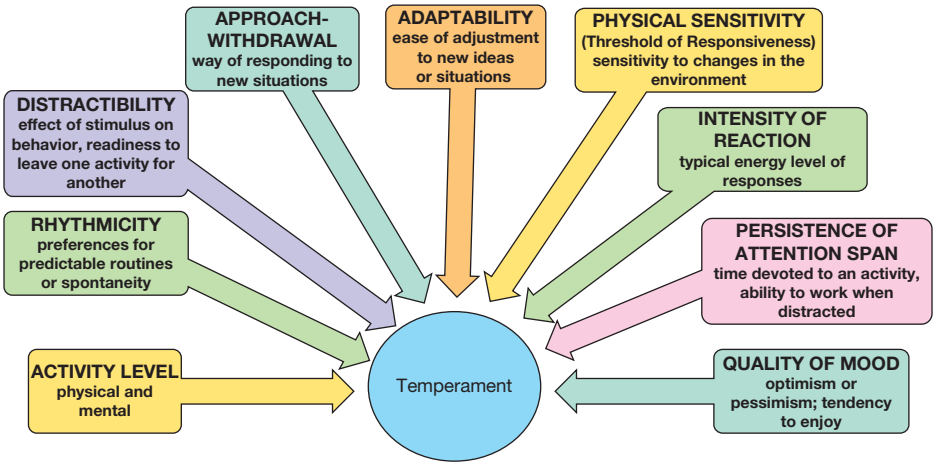
Learning more about yourself can help you be more sensitive to and accepting of differences among people, more aware of the impact of your personality on others, and better able to consider the kinds of work settings in which you might work most effectively.

TEMPERAMENT **Temperament** is a good place to begin to look at personal attributes. Alexander Thomas and Stella Chess (1996) refer to temperament as an individual behavioral style and typical ways of responding. Traits of temperament are neither good nor bad; they are simply part of who you are. However, some characteristics, such as a positive mood, a high activity level, and ease in adapting to new situations, are helpful in working with young children. The nine dimensions of temperament are shown in *Figure 1.1*.

> *One day several weeks after they started working together, Ruby arrived at school an hour before the children and families to be alone in the classroom to gather her thoughts and get materials ready. Michelle rushed in at the last minute with a bag of intriguing items she had gathered related to their curriculum on plants. A half-hour after the school opened, Ruby was quietly reading to a few of the younger children, including Joshua, who had been having a hard time separating from his mom. Michelle led the rest of the children on a hunt through the yard for flowers.*

Ruby and Michelle display some different temperament traits, particularly rhythmicity and intensity of reaction. Recognizing that a child, parent, or colleague has a temperament that is different from your own (as in the case of Ruby and Michelle) may keep you from finding their behavior negative or difficult. To heighten your awareness of your own temperament, think about your temperament's characteristics as shown in *Figure 1.1*.

Figure 1.1 Temperament Characteristics



MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES Howard Gardner proposed a model of **multiple intelligences** (Gardner, 1983, 2020), the idea that people are intelligent in different ways. Gardner defines **intelligence** as the ability to think and learn, based on what is needed and valued within a society or culture. The nine categories, Gardner (refer to *Figure 1.2*), can be another helpful tool for understanding yourself. When you realize your unique talents and strengths (your intelligences), you are better able to maximize them. This can also help in your work with colleagues. Ruby, with her inclination to reflect and her strong interpersonal intelligence, is likely to become the expert on addressing children's needs, while Michelle, with strong musical and naturalist intelligence, will become the expert in inspiring children and creating science curricula. If they are wise, they will come to appreciate each other for these differences.

Figure 1.2 Multiple Intelligences

Gardner's Intelligence Type	This might be you if. . .
Musical intelligence: • the ability to produce and respond to music	• you are especially sensitive to the aural environment of the classroom and play instruments and sing easily as you work with children.
Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence: • the ability to use the body to solve problems	• you demonstrate good coordination and play actively with children.
Logical-mathematical intelligence: • the ability to understand the basic properties of numbers and principles of cause and effect	• you enjoy numbers and logic and love to invent challenges for yourself and children.
Linguistic intelligence: • the ability to use language to express ideas and learn new words or other languages	• you are very articulate and enjoy word play, books, storytelling, and poetry.
Spatial intelligence: • the ability to form a mental image of spatial layouts	• you are sensitive to the physical arrangement of a room, are able to easily see how to rearrange the classroom, or especially enjoy working with children in the block area.
Interpersonal intelligence: • the ability to understand other people and work with them	• you are attentive to relationships and demonstrate sociability and leadership.
Intrapersonal intelligence: • the ability to understand things about oneself	• you have strong interests and goals, know yourself well, are focused inward, and demonstrate confidence.
Naturalist intelligence: • the ability to recognize plants and animals in the environment	• you know all about the flora and fauna in your community and have an especially well developed science curriculum and science area in your classroom.
Existential intelligence: • a concern with ultimate life issues, such as the meaning of life and death, why there is good and evil, the fate of the world, etc.	• you are often aware of both the beginning and end of life in each child in your care.

REFLECT ON

Your Temperament and Intelligences

Use Thomas and Chess's temperament dimensions and Gardner's model of multiple intelligences to reflect on your temperament and intelligences. What do they tell you about yourself? What are your preferences for engaging in activities and in the workplace. What are you good at? What is challenging for you? What might be the implications of what you learned about your personality for relating to children, families, and colleagues?

Values, Morality, and Attitudes Toward Diversity

VALUES What brought you to this field? Are you motivated by a love of children, a concern for social justice, values, or a passion for learning? Do you want to help children enjoy fulfilling lives, be successful students, or become productive members of society? The decisions you make each day, including your decision to become an early childhood educator, are all influenced by your **values**—the things you believe to be important, desirable, or worthwhile (e.g., truth, beauty, love, honesty, wisdom, loyalty, justice, and respect).

You develop your values from a variety of contexts, including your family, culture, religion, and community. It is often surprising to discover that other people do not share the values that you hold dear. Awareness can help you realize that values are very much a part of who you are and that your values might not be held by everyone in your life and work. Reflecting on your personal values helps you understand the impact they have on your life and on your professional values.

REFLECT ON

Your Values and the Moral Messages You Received as a Child

Make a list of your values. How do you think you developed these values? Which values were directly taught in your home, place of worship, or community? Were some taught in indirect ways? What messages did you receive about behaviors that are right and wrong? How do these reflect your childhood and upbringing? Can you think of ways that your values have changed over time?

MORALITY **Morality** is your view of what is right and wrong, your beliefs about your obligations, and your ideas about how you should behave (Kidder, 1995; Kipnis, 1987). Moral issues are serious—they concern our duties and obligations to one another. Morality is based on strongly held values such as telling the truth, helping others, being fair, respecting elders, putting family first, and respecting differences. These are examples of some of the earliest moral lessons that many of us learn from our families and others.

ATTITUDES TOWARD DIVERSITY Attitudes toward groups of people who are different from ourselves grow from the values and messages we receive as children from the adults in our lives, and from our experiences (or lack of them). We all have **biases**, inclinations to favor or reject individuals or groups of people. Many of us fail to recognize our own biases because it is embarrassing and places us in an unfavorable light. But ignoring biases does not make them go away. They influence all of our relationships.

Biases lead to stereotypes and prejudices. A **stereotype** is an oversimplified generalization, the belief that all people with a particular characteristic are the same. **Prejudice** is a prejudgment for or against a person or group. If you have been rejected or negatively

judged because of your age, sex, color, culture, religion, language, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, appearance, place of origin, abilities, or other characteristics, you will be aware of the powerful effect of prejudice. Prejudice in favor of a group also causes harm. Members of the privileged group get an unrealistic sense of entitlement, and those not favored may perceive themselves as unworthy.

Identifying your biases will enable you to recognize them (Derman-Sparks et al., 2020). Awareness may help you be more accepting of differences or correct a tendency to react to a child or family. This awareness might remind you to pay more attention to the children you tend to overlook. Many teachers actively work to dispel bias by identifying the things they like about a child or family member who triggers a negative reaction. When you focus on positives, you are more easily able to develop a special affection for a child or adult whom you were once inclined to dislike. Your newfound appreciation of a child or family can also influence your feelings about other members of a group.

Ask yourself if you have strong negative feelings toward some groups of children and families or if you have definite preferences for children of certain groups or with certain personality traits. If so, consider how this will negatively impact children in your care. If you do not feel that you can overcome these biases, you should consider whether or not you should pursue becoming an early childhood educator.

In their powerful 2019 statement, *Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education*, **NAEYC** lays out six recommendations to help overcome bias:

1. Build awareness and understanding of your culture, personal beliefs, values, and biases.
2. Recognize the power and benefits of diversity and inclusivity.
3. Take responsibility for your own biased actions, even if unintended, and actively work to repair harm.
4. Acknowledge and seek to understand structural inequities and their impact over time.
5. View your commitment to cultural responsiveness as an ongoing process.
6. Recognize that the professional knowledge base is changing.

(NAEYC, 2019)

We live in a diverse country in a diverse world. As a teacher of young children, you will have close contact with people who have different racial, economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, sexual orientations, abilities, and lifestyles than you have. This diversity offers both challenges and opportunities. Although you may have moments of discomfort, you also have the possibility of gaining new appreciation as you learn to value a wide range of human differences.

REFLECT ON

Your Attitudes Toward Diversity

Have you experienced bias or prejudice in your own life? What was the impact of that experience? Are there groups of people with whom you feel uncomfortable or whom you tend to dislike? What could be the impact of these experiences and attitudes on you as a future teacher of young children?

Life Experiences

You bring your whole history to your work with children and their families. Who you are as a person includes influences on your early development, temperament, and the attitudes and values that grow from your culture and experiences. These things will have an impact on the early childhood professional you will become.

Baozhai grew up as an only child. Both of her parents were teachers, and she always pretended to be a teacher to her dolls and toy animals. Baozhai loved school, but she was shy and did not make friends easily. She volunteered at a neighborhood preschool when she was in high school and discovered that she didn't feel shy with children. She decided to become a preschool teacher. She completed her degree in early childhood education and became a teacher in the preschool where she did a practicum placement. No one who meets her today can believe that she was ever shy and lacked friends.

As you enter the early childhood field, remember that you were once a child and that the ways you feel about yourself and others were profoundly influenced by your early experiences. These experiences impact your relationships and may crop up in unexpected and negative ways.

Darna grew up in a downtown neighborhood of a big city. Her parents were immigrants and did not speak English. Darna has vivid memories of her first unhappy days in kindergarten, where she felt isolated and different. But she soon loved school. When Darna was 8, her father was killed in an accident. Her single mom worked two jobs to care for her children. But Darna did well in school and earned a scholarship to go to college. She was the first person in her family to earn a degree. Today, Darna loves her job teaching in a Head Start program and often talks about the ways in which she feels she is making a difference to children from families like hers.

Many fine early childhood educators, like Darna, dedicate themselves to giving children the positive early experiences they missed. Some struggle to overcome their early negative experiences and current challenges and need assistance.

Sarah came from an abusive family. She left home before she was 16 but managed to go to school and earned an AS degree. She became a teacher of 3-year-olds. In her first year of teaching, Sarah was fiercely protective of the children in her class and frequently said, "Parents don't deserve to have children." She complained about her co-workers and stated loudly that she was paid too little to put in extra hours to fix up the classroom or meet with parents. At her annual review, Sarah's director suggested that she talk with a counselor to explore how she might find greater satisfaction in her work. Sarah's health insurance paid for visits with a therapist. Over the next 6 months Sarah came to realize that her childhood experiences were having an impact on her work. As she began to understand herself better, she found that she was more accepting of families and co-workers—and she was happier!

The capacity for caring and compassion is related to knowing and accepting yourself. This grows from observing yourself in the same honest and nonjudgmental way that you will observe children. Recognize that everyone experiences negative feelings and strong emotions such as anger and fear. Self-knowledge and acceptance are cornerstones of the quality of *compassion* that is critical in a teacher of young children.

Part of the process of growing as a professional (and the central theme in this book) is to ask yourself, "Who am I in the lives of children? Who do I want to be?" It is not easy to be aware of how your early experiences shape your attitudes toward children and families and your reactions to everyday situations. It is important to learn to look at yourself as objectively as you can and to accept feedback from others as valuable information that can help you grow instead of something to defend against or to use to belittle yourself.

REFLECT ON

Who You Are and Who You Want to Be in the Lives of Children

What events and experiences in your childhood most influence who you are today? What positive relationships contributed to your desire to be a teacher? What, if any, unhappy or difficult experiences from your past influence the ways you might work with children and families? What might be the connections between your childhood experiences and your desire to teach young children? Who do you want to be in the lives of children?

The Teacher as a Professional

Learning Outcome 1.3 **Demonstrate an understanding of what it means to be a professional, with emphasis on the role of morality and ethics.**

You are learning to be a teacher of young children, which means that you are planning to enter a *profession* and to become a *professional*. We hear these terms used every day, but their meanings are not always clear. In this book we define a **profession** as an occupation that provides an essential service to society and a **professional** as an individual who has received training and who uses it to serve society through doing the work of the profession. Discussion is under way about the status of the early childhood education profession and whether it meets most of the criteria of a profession (described in *Figure 1.3*). As you will see in the sections that follow, our field does not meet all of the criteria used to define a profession (Feeney, 2011). But there is no doubt that early childhood educators make important contributions to society by nurturing and educating young children during a critical period in the life cycle.

SOURCE: Jeff Reese

Awareness of the value of our contributions is growing, and efforts are under way to enhance our professional status. Early childhood educators have a powerful impact on all aspects of children's development, so it is imperative that our behavior reflects the ideals of dedication to service and provision of high-quality services—in other words, that we behave like professionals.

Knowledge and Skills

Specialized knowledge and skills are the central defining features of every profession. Knowledge and skills are described in teacher preparation standards. These include *Child Development Associate* (CDA) competencies, *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* developed by NAEYC, *Standards for Accomplished Early Childhood Teachers* created by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and *Standards for Special Education Teachers of Early Childhood Students* developed by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC, n/d). In addition to the standards produced by national groups, most states have created standards for educators. The NAEYC's Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation Standards (2021) address what graduates of early childhood training programs in 2-year, 4-year, and advanced programs need to know and be able to do. At the beginning of each chapter, we will identify which of the NAEYC professional standards the chapter addresses.

Figure 1.3 The Characteristics of a Profession

Scholars use the following criteria to identify a profession. A profession. . .

- has a specialized body of knowledge and expertise
- requires prolonged training
- has rigorous requirements for entry into training and admission to practice
- has agreed-on standards of practice (what is and is not considered good practice)
- is recognized as the only group in the society that can perform its function
- has autonomy—self-regulation and internal control over the quality of the services provided
- has a code of ethics that is enforced
- displays altruism—commitment to unselfish dedication to meeting the needs of others

Professional Conduct

Being a professional involves more than knowledge and skills. It also requires being a good employee, behaving professionally, knowing your legal responsibilities, and understanding professional boundaries.

Professional behavior concerns your conduct with regard to your employer, your colleagues, your community, and the families and children you serve. In many ways professional behavior is an extension of the rules of courtesy you learned at home and in your schooling. The *Golden Rules for Professional Behavior* feature lays out guidelines your employer will expect you to follow.

Professional boundaries distinguish between actions that are professionally appropriate and those that are inappropriate or unprofessional. Your professional relationships with children, families, and colleagues differ from the relationships you have with your family and friends. Sometimes it is easy to tell the difference. For example, you might share your political or religious beliefs, a risqué joke, or details of last night's party with a friend but you would not share them with the parent of a child in your class, or a student volunteer.

Because early education settings are more relaxed and informal than other professional settings, boundaries can easily become blurred. For a number of reasons, as a professional you need to maintain boundaries between you and the families of the children in your care, between you and your colleagues, and between you and those you supervise. Professional boundaries help you to be fair, to support the welfare of the group as a whole, and to promote relationships and independence. They give you guidance so that you do not offer advice or services you are not trained to provide and remind you to be discreet and avoid sharing highly personal information about yourself or others.

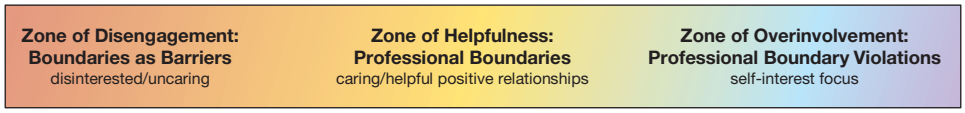
Professional boundaries can be conceptualized on a continuum from disengaged to overengaged, as shown in *Figure 1.4*. In the middle are helpful, professional relationships. Actions that fall at either end of the continuum can lead to outcomes that are detrimental. For example, failing to be friendly, to greet or learn names (on the disengagement end of the continuum) can damage relationships. However, crossing the boundary from friendly into friendship or intimacy may damage relationships with other families or colleagues. Additionally, it may lead to burn out and disappointment when you are no longer able to maintain this involvement.

GOLDEN RULES

for Professional Behavior

1. **Understand and support your program's mission.**
2. **Demonstrate a positive attitude.** Avoid complaining.
3. **Be punctual.** Arrive for work prepared and on time (or early).
4. **Be responsible.** Do what needs to be done; don't leave it for others. Apologize for your mistakes. Seek help when you need it.
5. **Dress in clean, appropriate clothing.** Your school is likely to have a dress code that provides specifics.
6. **Show respect.** Be polite and kind to others (children, families, and colleagues) even during stressful times. Use appropriate language. Don't swear.
7. **Be a good team member.** Set aside differences to work well with others. Good teamwork is often more important than skills and knowledge.
8. **Work to resolve problems productively.** Go to the person you have a problem with. Don't complain to others.
9. **Accept and use feedback** to make changes that improve your professional skills.
10. **Maintain confidentiality.** Don't gossip about children, families, or co-workers.

Figure 1.4 A Continuum of Professional Boundaries



Professional Values and Ethics

As we noted earlier, values are principles or standards that a person believes to be important. All professionals hold both personal and professional values. Personal values and morality cannot always guide professional behavior because not everyone has the same values, or the same morality. Even those who have the same values and moral commitments may not apply them in the same way in their work with children. As early childhood educators, our personal attitudes, values, and morality need to be supplemented with professional values that enable us to speak with one voice about our professional obligations and that give clear guidance about how to approach issues in the workplace that involve morality.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES Professional values are agreed-on statements of a profession's values, beliefs, and commitments. These are not a matter of preference but, rather, what members believe to be the foundation of their work. NAEYC's code of ethical conduct and statement of commitment (2005/2011) identifies **core values**, presented in *Figure 1.5*, that early childhood educators regard as the basis of their work.

> *Dona and Julian were teachers of 4-year-olds. Dona taught in the Blueberry Room. She was a great believer in play. She gave the children in her class large blocks of time for freely chosen play. Dona provided lots of sensory materials that children loved. Julian was the teacher in the Peach Room. He was committed to helping children learn and achieve. He saw play as a necessary but frivolous activity. Each day he focused several lessons on letter sounds and number concepts. Dona and Julian often argued about what is important for young children to learn and do in preschool.*

When you encounter conflicts in your work, they will often involve values. Sometimes these conflicts will be within yourself. For example, you may value freedom of expression (e.g., allowing children to engage in any dramatic play that interests them)

Figure 1.5 Core Values in Early Childhood Education

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to the following core values that are deeply rooted in the history of the field of early childhood care and education. We have made a commitment to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture*, community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

* The term culture includes ethnicity, racial identity, economic level, family structure, language, and religious and political beliefs, which profoundly influence each child's development and relationship to the world.

SOURCE: Reprinted from the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment, revised April 2005, reaffirmed and updated May 2011. Copyright 2005 NAEYC. Reprinted with permission.

versus the value of peace (e.g., forbidding guns and war play). You may have to choose between work that pays well and work you love. Or, like Dona and Julian, you may have a conflict with a colleague in which you have different values.

It is important to ensure your actions are consistent with your values. Sometimes, teachers are not aware when their behavior contradicts their values. A teacher we know thought she valued independence. But she realized she did not allow children to choose their own materials from the open shelves.

You are likely to encounter value conflicts with others. You may find yourself in a situation in which an administrator's actions (such as forbidding staff to hug children) conflict with an important value you hold (giving young children affectionate physical contact). You may find yourself in conflict with colleagues whose values lead them to different ideas about how to work with children (demanding quiet at mealtime, while you think meals are a perfect time to develop conversational skills).

At some point, you will probably have to work with family members who want you to do something that you feel is not right for the child. For example, they may be anxious about their child's success in school and want them to master academic content that you think is not appropriate for the child's age, interests, or abilities. Sometimes, these values conflicts are based on cultural differences, for example, whether it is best to do something for a child or encourage the child to do it independently.

It helps to recognize that differences in values are a natural and healthy part of life in a diverse society. You can learn to address values conflicts thoughtfully, though arriving at a solution is not always easy. Start by suspending judgment (the inner voice that says, "No! They're wrong! I'm right!") and listening carefully to the other person's viewpoint. When you listen carefully and work to communicate with a person with whom you have a values conflict, you can often find a solution that is satisfactory to both parties. For example, Julian and Dona in the above vignette each shared what they wanted children to learn and how they taught those things. At the end of several heated discussions, they decided to create a "learning through play" handout for families that gave ideas for playful activities to build academic success. But when competing views are based on strongly held values differences, you may simply have to agree to disagree.

Occasionally, values differences regarding teaching are so serious that you will find you no longer want to work in a program. For instance, one of our students chose to leave a good-paying job when the school adopted a paper-and-pencil curriculum that did not allow her to teach in ways that were consistent with her commitment to hands-on learning. Coming to this conclusion can be painful, but it may be the best alternative if the values difference is extreme. You might find that, like the student we just described, you are happier teaching in a setting that more closely reflects your strongly held beliefs about educational practices.

REFLECT ON

A Values Conflict

Can you remember a time when you and another person had a disagreement based on values? What values did each of you hold? What did you do? Were your values or the relationship changed by the conflict?

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS **Ethics** is the study of right and wrong, duties and obligations. **Professional ethics** describe the moral commitments of a profession, extending the personal values and morality of individuals through shared, critical reflection about right and wrong actions in the workplace. Standards of ethical conduct provide a shared common ground for professionals who strive to do the right thing.

The ethical commitments of a profession are contained in its **code of ethics**. An ethical code is different from program policies, regulations, or laws. It describes the values

of the field and the moral obligations of individual professionals. A code of ethics helps professionals do what is right—not what is easiest, what will bring the most personal benefit, or what will make them most popular. When followed by the members of a profession, a code of ethics assures the public that practice is based on moral standards and supports the best interests of those being served (Feeney et. al. 2020).

The most compelling reason for early childhood educators to have a code of ethics is that young children are vulnerable and lack the power to defend themselves. Adults are larger and stronger and control the resources children need. Lilian Katz and Evangeline Ward (1978/1993) pointed out that the more powerless the client (the person or organization being helped), the more necessary it is for practitioners to behave ethically. Young children cannot defend themselves from teachers who are uncaring or abusive. For that reason, it is extremely important for those who work in early childhood programs to act fairly and responsibly on children's behalf. Another important reason for early childhood educators to have a code of ethics is that they serve a variety of client groups—children, families, and employing agencies. Most early childhood educators agree that their primary responsibility and loyalty is to the children. But it can be hard to keep sight of this when parents, agencies, or administrators demand that their concerns be given priority.

Codes developed by NAEYC and the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children are specific to work with young children in the United States. If you live or work in another country, you may have a code of ethics that reflects local values and culture. The Code of Ethics developed by the NAEYC was designed to help teachers answer the question "What should the good early childhood educator do when faced with a situation that involves ethics?" The Code is based on the core values of the early childhood field and organized into four sections describing professional responsibilities to children, families, colleagues, and community and society. It is designed to help you make responsible ethical decisions. It includes **ideals** that describe exemplary practice and **principles** that describe practices that are required, prohibited, and permitted. (The NAEYC Code can be found in Appendix A of this text and at https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/ethical-conduct.) All educators who work with young children should identify the code that applies to their program, read it carefully to understand their ethical responsibilities, and refer to the code when ethical guidance is needed.

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS **Ethical responsibilities** are those things that must or must not be done. They are clear-cut and not subject to deliberation. The first and most important of the responsibilities spelled out in the NAEYC Code is that the professional should do no harm. The first item (P-1.1) reads, "Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children. This principle has precedence over all others in this Code" (NAEYC, 2005/2011). This item in the NAEYC Code tells us that the first priority of every early childhood educator must be the well-being of children and that every action and decision should first be considered in the light of potential harm.

A second very important responsibility is the obligation to keep information shared in the course of professional duties strictly confidential (**confidentiality** is a hallmark of every profession). This is an imperative responsibility for early childhood educators and one often violated because we work closely with children and family members and acquire a great deal of information about them. Other ethical responsibilities include being familiar with the knowledge base of early childhood education and basing practice on it; being familiar with laws and regulations that have an impact on children and programs; respecting families' culture, language, customs and beliefs, child-rearing

values, and right to make decisions for their children; attempting to resolve concerns with co-workers and employers collegially; and assisting programs in providing a high quality of service.

Not all work problems and conflicts involve ethics. If the teachers next door use an outdated curriculum, it may not meet your standards or provide the best experiences for children, but they are not being unethical. If the director fails to order the paint, it is annoying but not unethical. An ethical issue has to do with right and wrong, rights and responsibilities, and human welfare. If you decide you are facing an issue that involves ethics, you need to determine whether it involves an ethical responsibility or is an **ethical dilemma**.

An ethical dilemma involves competing professional values and has more than one defensible resolution. It puts the interests of one person or group in conflict with those of another (Feeney & Freedman 2018). For instance, it might mean placing the needs of a child above those of the parent, as when, for example, a parent asks teachers to prevent a child from taking a nap, when the child wants one, so that the child falls asleep at night. In an ethical dilemma, each choice involves some benefits and some costs. In the nap situation, preventing the child from napping honors the parent's wish but does not address the child's need to sleep. Allowing the child to nap ensures a better experience in school for the child but a worse evening for the family. The central question is this: Does it harm the child? Assuming it does not, either of these solutions could be justified using a code of ethics, though neither will satisfy everyone's needs. However, if the child's well-being is harmed, then it is no longer a dilemma but a responsibility.

The first thing to do when facing an ethical dilemma is to determine if a child might potentially be harmed. If this is the case, you must give priority to the needs of the child. The next thing to do is look for guidance in your Code of Ethical Conduct.

The *Guidelines for Ethical Reflection* feature provides direction for thinking about ethical dilemmas. Each situation involves conflicting responsibilities with two justifiable resolutions.

GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL REFLECTION

A feature used throughout this book, *An Ethical Dilemma*, is designed to give you experience in thinking through how an early childhood educator should approach a professional ethical dilemma. When a dilemma occurs in the workplace, it is best if your response is based on the collective ethical wisdom of the profession, not on your personal view of the right thing to do. The question changes from "What should I do in this situation? to "What should the good early childhood educator do in this situation?" Although it may not always tell you exactly what to do, the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct can help you think through the ethical issues that you encounter and remind you that the primary commitment of an early childhood educator is to the well-being of children. When faced with an ethical dilemma, the best course of action is sometimes obvious, but at other times you will need to think hard to come up with the best possible resolution. The NAEYC Code will help you clarify your responsibilities and prioritize values. Ethical dilemma examples are found throughout the chapters in this book. Once you have determined that you are facing an ethical dilemma, you can use the following steps to guide you in finding a satisfactory resolution:

- Identify the conflicting responsibilities. What does each of the people involved need?
- Look for guidance in the NAEYC Code: What are the applicable ideals and principles and core values? Be sure to look at all of the sections of the Code that might apply.
- Brainstorm possible solutions.
- Based on your review of the Code and your reflection about the situation, decide on the most ethically defensible resolution to the dilemma.

When considering *An Ethical Dilemma* boxes in subsequent chapters, refer to these guidelines.

Finding Your Path: Careers in Early Childhood Education

Learning Outcome 1.4 **Describe educational pathways that are appropriate to a variety of career goals and identify some that you think might be appropriate for you.**

What kind of early childhood educator do you want to be? Do you dream of teaching kindergarten? Do you envision yourself in the midst of a group of 3-year-olds? Do you see yourself running a small program in your home? Do you have a passion to share the joy of reading with 6-year-olds? In this section, we will explore career options in early childhood education and look at training requirements for various roles and stages of professional development.

Roles and Requirements

There are many settings in which you can work with young children and many roles you can take. These roles can be divided into two broad groups: working with children and working for children (Bredekamp 2011).

"Working *with* children" includes positions that involve direct responsibility for children's care and education (teacher, caregiver, family child care provider, etc.). "Working *for* children" includes positions that support children's development and learning but do not involve day-to-day interaction with them (child care center administrator, curriculum specialist, school principal, etc.).

Most of you who read this book are preparing to work directly with young children. Many of you will find this work satisfying for your entire career. Others may work with children for a period of time and then seek a new challenge or realize that you are more suited for other kinds of work. If you choose to move to another role, you are likely to find that what you learned about young children will prove to be valuable in your life in a variety of ways.

You will gain the knowledge and skill you need to work effectively with young children through specialized training in child development and early childhood education. Research has demonstrated that higher levels of teacher education result in better classroom quality and greater gains in children's cognitive and social development (Barnett, 2004; Early et al., 2007; Kontos & Wilcox-Herzog, 2001). This research has led to mandates to require more training, particularly in the federally funded Head Start program and state-funded **prekindergarten** programs. It has also led to efforts to coordinate training requirements for everyone who works with children from birth to age 8 in all settings.

All states require some specialized training in early childhood. The type of training, number of hours, certification, and assessment vary depending on role or position (e.g., teacher, assistant, administrator), the age of the children served, how the program is administered, and the community in which it is housed. In some places, different training is required for those who work with children younger than 3 years than for those who work with 3- to 5-year-olds.

In some states, teachers meet minimum requirements by completing the **Child Development Associate (CDA)** credential, which requires a high school diploma or GED, 120 hours of approved training, 480 hours of experience with young children, and demonstrated competence (Council for Professional Recognition, 2011). In other states, the minimum requirement for teachers in birth through age 5 programs is completion of an associate's degree in early childhood with course work in education and child development; experience with young children; and general education courses. Those with a bachelor's degree in education or child and family studies with early childhood course work may also teach in programs for children younger than 5. Some states and programs require that teachers complete a 4-year degree. Head Start requires all newly

hired and half of employed teachers to have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field.

Teaching prekindergarten through grade 3 in public schools requires a 4-year teacher preparation program that leads to a bachelor's degree in education. These programs qualify the teacher for a teaching certificate (also called a license). Program requirements vary based on states' requirements. Some 4-year institutions focus on preparing teachers to work with children from birth to age 8; some focus on preschool and **primary grades** (4–8 years); and others center on preparation for teaching kindergarten through sixth grade (5–12 years). Some offer a degree in early childhood education; others make it an endorsement added to an elementary certificate.

Interest in the qualifications of those who work with young children has increased (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015). In March 2020, the early childhood education field proposed three professional early childhood educator designations: Early Childhood Educator (ECE) I requires a credential like the CDA, Early Childhood Educator (ECE) II requires an associate's degree, and Early Childhood Educator (ECE) III requires a bachelor's or master's degree (Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession, 2020). *Table 1.2* lays out recommended training for a variety of roles in early childhood settings.

Table 1.2 Roles and Training Required to Work with Children in U.S. Early Childhood Programs

Setting	Role	Training Currently Required in Most States	Designation and Training Suggested in the Unifying Framework
Homes	Family child care provider	Infant/child CPR and first aid	ECE II: AS/AA in Early Childhood Education
	Nanny/au pair	No formal training required	
	Home visitor	No formal training required	
Centers (ECE programs for children under 5 and out-of-school programs for elementary school children)	Teacher aide/assistant	Orientation and on-the-job training or CDA Credential	ECE I: Certificate/Credential in Early Childhood Education
	School-age program leader	High school diploma or equivalent	
		Orientation and on-the-job training	
	Assistant Teacher/assistant caregiver	Training in working with young children	ECE II: AS/AA in Early Childhood Education
	Teacher/caregiver	Training in working with young children	ECE III BA/BEd in Early Childhood Education
		College degree (education, early childhood education, or child development)	MA/MEd in Early Childhood Education (initial prep)
	Lead, or head teacher for children from birth to age 5	Same as teachers	ECE III BA/BEd in Early Childhood Education
			MA/MEd in Early Childhood Education (initial prep)
Elementary Schools	Educational assistant	Varies from state to state	ECE II: AS/AA in Early Childhood Education
	Teacher (preK, kindergarten, grades 1–3 in a public school)	Bachelor's degree and elementary teacher certification	ECE III BA/BEd in Early Childhood Education
		Licensure, which varies by state	MA/MEd in Early Childhood Education (initial prep)
	Special education preschool teacher	A bachelor's degree in education with specialized training in special education	ECE III BA/BEd in Early Childhood Education
			MA/MEd in Early Childhood Education (initial prep)
	Resource teacher or specialist	Degree and teaching credential, plus training to prepare in subject area	ECE III BA/BEd in Early Childhood Education
			MA/MEd in Early Childhood Education (initial prep)

REFLECT ON

Your Ideal Job

Imagine a perfect job for you in early childhood education. What would the job be like? Why does it appeal to you? What training would you need for this job?

Career Paths

Every early childhood educator has a story.

> *Fred always enjoyed being with children. He took a child development class in high school and loved the time he spent with kids in a preschool. Like his older brother, Fred went into auto mechanics and became a certified mechanic. His family approved, and he made good money. But Fred was dissatisfied; working as a mechanic was not fulfilling. After 3 years, he decided to go back to school to train to be an early childhood educator. He realized that he wouldn't make as much money, but he knew this was what he wanted to do.*
>
> *As a young mother, Esperanza enrolled her son in the campus child care center while working on her BA in French. She often stayed at the center and helped out. One day, the staff asked her if she wanted to work part-time at the center. The next semester, Esperanza changed her major to education. Today, she is a kindergarten teacher.*
>
> *Aurelia always knew she wanted to be a teacher. She enrolled in pre-ed classes as soon as she entered college. She worked in a child care program as a part-time aide while she was going to college. Aurelia became a preschool teacher after she graduated and soon went on to graduate school. Today, she is the education director for a small preschool.*

People come to the field of early childhood education in a variety of ways. It is estimated that only 25% of early childhood educators are like Aurelia. These teachers began their careers in the "traditional" manner by majoring in early childhood education before they started working in the field. Some (about 25%) are like Esperanza and were introduced to the field as "parents," observing the benefits of a good program for their young child and then going to school to get formally trained. Others, like Fred (about 50%), have come by what can be called a "serendipitous" route, discovering the field as a happy accident, often after receiving a degree in another field and later obtaining the specialized training needed to become an early childhood educator (Bredekamp, 1992).

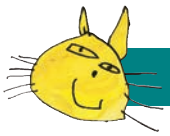
We, the authors of this book, reflect two of these typical paths. Stephanie did what we like to refer to as "work her way up" to early childhood education. She earned degrees in anthropology and teaching secondary school. After employment as a social worker in a Head Start program, she recognized the importance of early development and found her way to early childhood education. Eva and Sherry completed early childhood training before they entered the field. Eva always knew she wanted to become a preschool or kindergarten teacher and entered college with that as her career goal. As an undergraduate majoring in sociology, Sherry took a child development class as an elective and switched her major to child development when she became interested in learning more about young children.

Although the paths to entry are diverse, our observations over the years confirm Laura Colker's (2008) assertion that many early childhood educators enter the field because they feel it is their "calling" and because they have a commitment to making a difference in children's lives and in the world.

REFLECT ON

Your Path

Have you always known you wanted to be a teacher? Did you receive training in another field and discover early education by happy accident? Did you come to early childhood education with your own children? How do you think the path that brought you to the field might influence your perspective as a teacher?



FINAL THOUGHTS

You are at the beginning of your career as an early childhood educator and have many rewarding experiences ahead of you. You already know that you will need to work hard in your college classes. But you may not realize that this is just the beginning—you will continue to learn well after your college work is over. Lilian Katz (1995) describes the first year of teaching as "survival." Don't be deterred by this. You will move on to other, more rewarding, stages. Good teachers are lifelong learners because they want to be and because it is essential to their work. If you aspire to be a good teacher—and we assume you do—you will continue to learn about children's development and how to teach them for your whole career.

A job becomes a *calling* when it involves an important purpose, deep values, and a strong sense of how one wants to contribute to the world. When you get paid to do work that has meaning in your life—work that you love—you have a calling. We hope you will find that work in early childhood education will be your calling: a way you can experience personal fulfillment as you serve young children and their families.

The children are waiting.

To Learn More

Read

32 Third Graders and One Class Bunny: Life Lessons from Teaching, P. Done (2009)
Bad Guys Don't Have Birthdays: Fantasy Play at Four, V. Paley (1991)
Good Morning Children: My First Years in Early Childhood Education, S. Pappas (2009)
Guiding Principles for the New Early Childhood Professional Building on Strength and Competence, V. Washington & B. Gadson (2017)
I Learn from Children, C. Pratt (2014)
Living Your Colors: Practical Wisdom for Life, Love, Work, and Play, T. Maddron (2002)
My First Year as a Teacher, P. R. Kane (1991)
Teaching Four-Year-Olds: A Personal Journey, C. B. Hillman (Revised 2011)
The Boy Who Would Be a Helicopter, V. Paley (1990)
The Girl with the Brown Crayon, V. Paley (1997)
The Importance of Being Little: What Preschoolers Really Need from Grown ups, E. Christakis (2017)
The Kindness of Children, V. Paley (1999)
The World According to Mister Rogers, F. Rogers (2003)
Totto-chan, the Little Girl at the Window, T. Kuroyanagi (2012)

Visit a Website

The following agencies and organizations have websites that are relevant to the study of teachers of young children:

American ECE Associations

- National Association for the Education of Young Children, https://www.naeyc.org
- Association for Childhood Education International, https://www.ceinternational1892.org/
- The Southern Early Childhood Association, https://www.seca.info/

State ECE Associations: Most state early childhood associations have a website that will give you information about local events. Search for your state AEYC.
International ECE Associations: Many other countries also have early childhood associations with websites. These have useful resources, and each one will help you be aware of how early childhood teaching is the same and different from practices in the United States. Search for any country's early childhood association.

Personality Inventories/Career Explorations

- Myers & Briggs Foundation
- Self-Directed Search

START YOUR PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

When you interview for a position in education, as in many other fields, you may be called upon to present a portfolio that documents your skills, knowledge, and training. In some colleges, you will create a portfolio to assess your competence. We recommend you begin one at the outset of your educational journey, starting now. It will serve as a convenient way to keep track of your training and skills. Whether or not you share it with employers or professors, it is an excellent personal tool for recording your growth as a teacher. At the end of every chapter, we will suggest something to add to your **professional portfolio**.

Your portfolio should include only items that reflect your professional abilities and growth. It is not a place to store handouts and other resources. Begin by selecting an open, flexible format that is easy to organize and modify (such as a three-ring binder or a PowerPoint presentation) and that will be easy to share when you interview for a job. Here are some things you can put in to get started:

1. **An Introduction to who you are**
    - **Significant events in your life** that led you to choose early childhood education as your career
    - **Résumé:** an outline of your current qualifications and experience
    - **Letter(s) of recommendation:** a letter or letters describing your work and your character from employers, supervisors, or teachers
    - **Later on you will add:** an educational mission statement and a philosophy statement
2. **Qualifications**
    - Include degrees, certificates, or diplomas you currently hold (can be from other fields, e.g., music, water safety). You will add to this as you complete your training.

3. **Training record**

   - Create a place to keep certificates of attendance or records of any workshop, class, or conference you attend. Include the date of the training, the name of the trainer or sponsoring organization, and the number of hours of training.

4. **Demonstrations of knowledge and competence**

   - Include CDA, NAEYC, or your state's competency areas and create a section for each area. In each section, you will put examples that demonstrate what you know and have done (e.g., write a lesson plan).

Chapter 2
The Field of Early Childhood Education

It takes a village to raise a child.

AFRICAN PROVERB

SOURCE: Jeff Reese

Learning Outcomes

2.1 Describe the scope of the field of early childhood education and identify types of programs and services for children between birth and 8 years of age.

2.2 Name and describe measures used to protect children and support quality in early childhood programs.

2.3 Identify some issues facing the field of early childhood education.

NAEYC PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION STANDARDS

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Preparation Standard (2020) that applies to this chapter:

Standard 6: Professionalism as an Early Childhood Educator

6a. Identify and involve themselves with the early childhood field and serve as informed advocates for young children, families, and the profession.

This is an exciting time to be entering the **field of early childhood** education in the United States. It is exciting because research has demonstrated the critical importance of the early years and there is stronger public support for early education than has existed in decades. The value of early childhood education is being acknowledged as a significant benefit to society and as the foundation of a healthy economy. Initiatives such as **universal pre-K**, once held as hopes and wishes, are on the brink of becoming realities. And while not all may come to fruition, it is almost certain that you are entering a field with a more positive future than at any other time in our nation's history.

As you begin your study of **early childhood** and start to think about how you will engage with young children, it is also the time to acquire basic understanding of the field you are about to enter. In this chapter we provide a snapshot of early education and care in the United States today. We discuss the types of programs that are available for families and children and look at some of the issues that confront the field. Understanding the field and its important contributions to our society will help you as you make career choices and become an advocate for young children.

What Is the Field of Early Childhood Education?

Learning Outcome 2.1 **Describe the scope of the field of early childhood education and identify types of programs and services for children between birth and 8 years of age.**

When early childhood educators talk about "**the field of early childhood**" they mean all the people and programs that support young children and their families, including programs that train early childhood educators. They also mean the agencies and systems that sponsor and fund programs. When they refer to **early childhood education (ECE)** they mean the education and care provided in all settings for children between birth and age 8 (*Figure 2.1*).

Early childhood education is designed to support children's development and prepare them for later school experiences. The great majority of early childhood programs also provide care for children while family members are at work or in school. All share the overarching purpose of supporting young children's opportunities to achieve their

Figure 2.1 Who Are the Children?

According to the 2020 Census, children—birth through age 8—make up almost 11% of the U.S. population (2020 Census). The country and the population of young children are increasingly diverse. As of 2020, 50% of these children are White, 26% are Hispanic, 15% are Black, 5% are Asian, 5% are mixed race groups, and about 0.5% are of Hawaiian and Pacific Islander descent. (KIDS COUNT Data Center)

full potential and become valued members of society. Programs for young children and their families vary in the services they provide, in the length of the program day and year, and in the philosophy and goals that guide their practice. They can be classified by:

- the ages and characteristics of the children served,
- the program purpose or mission,
- the place in which they are housed,
- the agency that regulates them,
- their sponsorship and funding, and
- their specific curricular model.

As you become an early childhood educator, you will learn about different kinds of programs for young children. We recommend that you visit and participate in several to gain direct experience with a variety of ages and approaches.

Do you envision yourself teaching first graders to read? Do you imagine yourself working with infants? Are you dreaming of teaching preschool? Whatever your answer, you probably view each of these ages of children, and your own role, quite differently. The most common distinction between early childhood programs has to do with the age of the children served. **Early childhood** encompasses a wide span of the life cycle. Typically, programs are categorized according to the following age groups:

Infants and toddlers—birth to 36 months

Preschoolers—3- and 4-year-olds

Kindergartners—5- and 6-year-olds

Primary-age children—7- and 8-year-olds

Historically, programs for children under the age of 5 have been separate from programs for children ages 5 through 8. For this reason, we begin by looking at programs and services offered for children and families in these two categories: birth through 5 years and 5 through 8 years.

Programs for Children Birth Through 5 Years of Age

You will find programs for children from birth through age 5 in many places. They are in centers, schools, and homes. They are in community centers, office buildings, malls, homeless shelters, storefronts, places of worship, and hospitals. There may be one on your college campus. If you are a member of the armed services or a military spouse, there is almost certainly a program on your base. You may find one in a nearby public park, beach, or library. Some are even provided without walls through home visiting, where early childhood educators meet families in their homes. What all have in common, beyond the ages they serve, is that their purpose includes supporting the education and care of young children and their families.

Regardless of what a program is called (refer to *Figure 2.2*), care for children's physical and psychological needs is essential. Since children are learning from all their experiences, a program—no matter its name—is also providing education. The primary purpose of some programs is to support children's learning and development and prepare them to be successful in the next level of schooling. In others, the primary purpose is to provide care so family members can go to work, to school, or participate in training. But **child care** versus education is a false distinction.

Early childhood programs have additional purposes. Some are designed to provide a safety net for families whose children are at risk for school failure due to circumstances such as poverty or violence. These programs provide care and learning opportunities for children as well as support for their families. Others provide education for family members.

Figure 2.2 What Early Childhood Programs Are Called

Names give us a common understanding and frame of reference. Programs for young children go by many different names. Here are some commonly used names and what they usually mean.

Programs for children birth to age 5:

- Child Care Center: a program for children from birth to age 5, with a primary emphasis on care for working families.
- Child Development Center: a center-based program for children from birth to age 5, with a primary emphasis on education.
- Child Development Lab: a program for children from birth to age 5 in a college or university, with a primary emphasis on education, designed for teacher training, curriculum development, or research.
- Daycare Center: program for children from birth to age 5, with a primary emphasis on care for working families, often used interchangeably with child care.
- Early Head Start: a federally sponsored program for children from low-income families prenatally to age 2, with an emphasis on education for children and their families.
- Family Child Care: a program for young children provided by a caregiver in their home.
- Head Start: a federally sponsored early childhood program for 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families, with an emphasis on education for children and their families—may be delivered in a center or the child's home. Used as a generic term for preschool in some communities.
- Infant-Toddler program: a center-based program for children before age 3, with a primary emphasis on education.
- Montessori School: a center-based education focused early childhood program using the philosophy, materials, and methods designed by Maria Montessori (refer to Chapter 3). Used as a generic term for preschool in some communities.
- Multi-generation, 2Gen, or Two Generation: programs for children from birth through age 5, with an emphasis on education for children and their families.
- Parent Cooperative: a center-based program for 3- and 4-year-olds run by parents, with a primary emphasis on education.
- PreK: programs for 4-year-olds, with an emphasis on education, often in public schools, occasionally including 3-year-olds.
- Preschool: a center-based program for 3- and 4-year-olds, with a primary emphasis on education.

Programs for children 5–8:

- After-School Care: a program for elementary school children that provides child care after the school day. May also provide care before school starts and on holidays.
- Charter School: an independently operated, publicly funded school.
- Elementary School: kindergarten through 5th or 6th grade.
- Homeschool: education for children in the home rather than in a public or private school.
- Kindergarten: a public or private education-focused program for 5-year-olds.
- Lab School/Laboratory School: a program in a college or university with a primary emphasis on education designed for teacher training, curriculum development, or research. May include elementary and high school.
- Primary School: kindergarten through 3rd grade in public or private schools.

Early childhood programs can also be a vehicle for the provision of health, nutrition, and social services to children and families. Revitalization of indigenous culture and languages is yet another program purpose.

Today's programs and services for children under 5 have differing missions and are sponsored by a wide variety of organizations. Some are run by government agencies at the federal (e.g., Head Start), state, or local level (e.g., public preK).

Others originate in philanthropic organizations (e.g., the YWCA), for-profit corporations (e.g., Bright Horizons), faith-based institutions, community empowerment organizations, as individual sole-proprietor businesses, and community organizations (IOM/NRC, 2015).

Because child care programs contribute to a reliable and productive workforce, some large corporations such as Google and Ford, hospitals, and government agencies provide such programs for their employees. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)—the largest employer sponsor of child care—offers programs for children of personnel who serve in the military. Colleges, universities, and high schools may sponsor and subsidize early childhood programs that offer care and education for the children of faculty, staff, and students and provide laboratories for teacher education and research. If your college has a **laboratory school** this may be where you will observe and interact with children and practice teaching.

FUNDING Unlike programs for children age 5 and over, the cost of early childhood education in the United States for children under age 5 has traditionally been considered a parental responsibility, and families have borne the burden for the expense of services and programs. In some cases, programs sponsored by nonprofit agencies subsidize costs and reduce the amount paid by families. In other cases, programs are owned and operated by chains that attempt to make child care affordable and profitable by using standardized building plans, bulk purchase of equipment and supplies, and a standardized curriculum. However, increasingly, the cost of care has become unaffordable for many families (Child Care Aware of America, 2019).

Government (both federal and local) funding of programs for children under 5 has been limited to groups such as children with disabilities, children whose families qualify for government subsidies, or children whose parents are employed by the military or other government agencies. There is increasing recognition that the current system is inadequate.

EDUCATION-FOCUSED PROGRAMS Although the great majority of programs for children from birth through age 5 provide both education and child care, historically there has been a distinction between programs focused on education and those focused on care. A number of different types of early childhood programs have education as their primary focus.

Private Preschools and Child Development Centers Private programs that are focused on education for children under 5 may be called **preschools** or **child development centers,** terms that have come to be synonymous. They may be run by a faith-based or community institution or be operated by a group or an individual (e.g., **parent cooperative preschools**). Some follow a particular curriculum model (e.g., Montessori, Reggio, or Waldorf). Some are an adjunct to a private elementary school. Some are multi-site programs run by a board or administrative body. Others are independent, a single program with only one site.

Head Start **Head Start** is a comprehensive federally funded program that provides education and support services to families and young children with limited resources. It is designed to help prepare children for school by providing high-quality early education and comprehensive support services. Head Start programs include services such as health screenings and referrals; physical, mental health, and social services; and nutritious meals. They engage family members in their child's learning and development and involve them in the administration of their child's program. Family support, such as obtaining health insurance, financial and housing security, and job training, is also an important part of Head Start.

Early Head Start serves low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers. It is designed to empower families as their baby's first teacher. Early Head Start programs provide home visits, family support groups, comprehensive health services, nutrition, support for parenting, and comprehensive services to pregnant women. Some employ a **home visiting** model in which services are provided in the family home.