EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

8E

A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

JEFFREY TRAWICK-SMITH

Early Childhood Development

A Multicultural Perspective

Eighth Edition

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Pearson

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Cover Image by Alina Demidenko/Shutterstock; Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock; Mr Boiko Oleg/Shutterstock

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Trawick-Smith, Jeffrey W., author.
Title: Early childhood development: a multicultural perspective / Jeffrey Trawick-Smith, Eastern Connecticut State University.
Description: Eighth Edition. | [Boston]: Pearson Education, [2023] | Seventh Edition: 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022008547 | ISBN 9780137544981 (Paperback)
Subjects: LCSH: Child development. | Early childhood education. | Multicultural education. | Cognition in children. | Observation (Educational method) | Children with disabilities—Education.
Classification: LCC LB1115 .T73 2023 | DDC 372.21—dc23/eng/20220421
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022008547

ScoutAutomatedPrintCode

Rental
ISBN-10: 0-13-754498-7
ISBN-13: 978-0-13-754498-1

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Dedication

This edition is dedicated to the memory of my sister, Jill Huels, who has touched the lives of countless young children as a committed, responsive, and caring teacher and who has touched my own life in ways she did not even realize.

About the Author

Jeffrey Trawick-Smith is Professor Emeritus in the Center for Early Childhood Education at Eastern Connecticut State University. He has authored or edited 6 books and over 50 articles—many related to families, culture, and early childhood development. He has conducted 42 empirical studies of young children of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds, including 6 that were funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Spencer Foundation, and United Technologies Corporation. He has presented his findings at national and international conferences and has taught courses on early childhood development and families to undergraduate and graduate students.

About This Book

Early Childhood Development: A Multicultural Perspective, eighth edition, is a book about the development of all children in the world—those of different cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, gender identities, and those with disabilities. It examines the physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and intellectual characteristics of children from birth to eight years of age. The book is used in the United States and around the world as the primary text for child development or early child development courses in community colleges or 4-year programs in education, psychology, or nursing. It can also be used as a supplementary text in graduate-level, life-span human development courses where a goal is to promote cultural understanding and sensitivity. Some of my colleagues have used it as a supplement in courses in multicultural education or the antibias curriculum. The book is intended to assist teachers, childcare providers, nurses, and family service and mental health professionals in understanding and celebrating the rich diversity of development among children in all neighborhoods in the United States and around the globe.

Text Organization and Features

This book resembles other texts in child development. It includes all current and important issues and topics in the field. It is organized in a conventional ages-and-stages format. A closer look, however, reveals several unique features. First, each topic is examined from a multicultural perspective. Sections on language development, for example, include descriptions of second-language learning and the linguistic development of non-English speakers. Chapters on intellectual development highlight cultural diversity in cognitive styles. Attachment patterns and peer relations among children of diverse backgrounds are explored. Cultural variations in motor play and development are examined.

A second unique feature is that children with atypical development are highlighted. Characteristics of children with the wide range of disabilities that can be identified in the early years are smoothly integrated into the chapters. For example, the development of children with autism spectrum disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder are fully discussed in sections on social and emotional development. Those with intellectual and learning disabilities are extensively described in chapters dealing with cognition. One purpose of the text is to assist professionals who work with children and families in understanding and appreciating the characteristics of children with challenging conditions, who will be increasingly integrated into regular classrooms or served by community agencies.

A final important feature of the book is its real-life, practical orientation. It is intended as a hands-on guide, with suggestions for professional practice presented in each chapter. Nearly every topic is illustrated with engaging, **real-life vignettes** of children, teachers, and families that bring complex research to life. Each chapter ends with a **Research Into Practice** section that outlines practical classroom and parenting applications. A **Child Guidance** feature in most chapters highlights a proven research-based technique for enhancing children's social, emotional, cognitive, or language growth.

Why Study Child Development from a Multicultural Perspective?

Why is a multicultural focus in child development so important? During the 21st century, traditionally underrepresented groups—often called minorities—will constitute a new majority within the United States. Children from families of historically underrepresented groups make up a growing percentage of the preschool and school-age population. Early childhood classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, and teachers and other professionals must be prepared to meet the unique needs of young children of varying backgrounds. Even teachers of monocultural classrooms must assist their students in understanding and appreciating other cultures. A primary goal of early childhood education today is to provide the skills, understanding, and sensitivity that children need in a pluralistic society.

This textbook is designed to assist professionals in meeting that goal by providing a culturally sensitive account of developmental processes.

New to This Edition

This eighth edition has been completely revised to include new research findings from over 2,000 recent journal articles. Many engaging, real-life vignettes profiling children, families, and professionals have been added to illustrate key concepts. The following are new topics that are included or expanded in this edition:

- Trauma, trauma-informed professional practice, and the cumulative effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are explored in every chapter.
- Extensive sections are included on the impact on young children of current societal problems, such as:
  - Global warming and environmental inequality
  - The COVID-19 pandemic
  - The harm caused by recent separation of children from their families at the Southern U.S. border
  - Young children's understandings of racism in the era of Black Lives Matter
- New research findings on children with autism spectrum disorder and other neurologically based disabilities are presented.
- Greater discussion is provided of childhood gender identity, including the development of gender fluid and transgender children.
- Greatly enhanced sections on the language and literacy development of dual language learners have been added.
- The contributions of play to young children's social and emotional development have been expanded and updated.

Key Content Updates by Chapter

Chapter 1: Added a discussion of trauma-informed perspectives on childhood and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); included a new table with definitions of terms for children and family of diverse backgrounds and abilities.

Chapter 2: Added an extended section on assessment tools and methods for identifying children with disabilities.

Chapter 3: Created a new section on theories of development and their application to children with disabilities.

Chapter 4: Included a section on new risks to prenatal development in the U.S., including opioid addiction in pregnancy and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 5: Added a full discussion and a new table on newborn developmental risk factors, including family trauma.

Chapter 6: Presented new information on how trauma and the cumulative effects of adverse childhood experiences affect infant brain growth; reviewed new research on infant obesity.

Chapter 7: Extended sections on the importance of infant and toddler play on cognitive development; added a section on infants and toddlers with intellectual disabilities and early intervention; presented new information on families of infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Chapter 8: Extended sections on infant and toddler second language learning; added a multicultural critique of "the 30-million-word gap" of children in poverty; summarized new research on infants and toddlers with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, and those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Chapter 9: Presented new research on features and definitions of infant attachment across cultures; added a new section on trauma, multiple ACEs, and attachment; included an extended review of research on childcare; included a new discussion of infant and toddler emotions and culture.

Chapter 10: Presented additional information and several new illustrative vignettes to describe cultural variations in motor development and play; described new information on motor play and cognitive processes; added a new section on gender and motor development; reviewed the concept of universal design to meet the needs of children with physically challenging conditions.

Chapter 11: Included new, extensive sections on executive functions, including inhibitory control, attention, and working memory.

Chapter 12: Added new research on language and literacy development of dual language learners; extended the section on early literacy to include specific reading skills such as phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, phonics, and sight words; included a new section on how disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disabilities, inhibit early literacy.

Chapter 13: Added a new section on play and social and emotional development; expanded sections on cultural diversity and the effects of trauma on emotional development; included a section on social and emotional development of transgender and gender fluid children; presented new research on oppositional defiant disorder and anxiety disorders.

Chapter 14: Presented new research on risks to the physical development of primary-age children, including gun violence, homelessness, and trauma; extended sections on physical disabilities.

Chapter 15: Added new sections on school learning across subject areas and reasons for the achievement gap between children of low- and middle-SES backgrounds; extended discussions of executive functions and their contributions to learning.

Chapter 16: Extended sections on bilingual education, including new research on *translanguaging*; added a section that compares models of reading instruction, including systematic phonics instruction, whole language, and balanced instruction; included a new section on reading disabilities and interventions.

Chapter 17: Added a new section on gender identity, including development of transgender and gender fluid children; included new information on ethnic-racial identity and pride, including the development of children who are biracial; extended the discussion on disabilities that affect social and emotional development, including ODD, CD, and ADHD; provided new research on social skills training.

Chapter 18: Extended the section on types of families, with greater emphasis on single-parent, LGBTQ, extended, adoptive, and foster families; summarized new research on cultural diversity in parenting styles and interactions; added a new section on family trauma.

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

LMS-Compatible Assessment Bank

With this new edition, all assessment types—quizzes, application exercises, and chapter tests—are included in LMS-compatible banks for the following learning management systems: Blackboard (9780137545285), Canvas (9780137545292), D2L (9780137545315), and Moodle (9780137545377). 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. When used in the LMS environment, these multiple-choice questions are automatically graded and include feedback for the correct answer and for each distractor to help guide students' 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 and include questions in multiple choice and short answer/essay formats.

Instructor's Manual (9780137545230)

The Instructor's Manual is provided as a Word document and includes resources to assist professors in planning their course.

PowerPoint® Slides (9780137545421)

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.

Note: All instructor resources—LMS-compatible assessment bank, Instructor's Manual, and 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 (i.e., Trawick-Smith), or the title (i.e., Early Childhood Development: A Multicultural Perspective). 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

This edition has been written at a challenging time in our country. The pandemic, political turmoil, and the tragic events that have given new life to the Black Lives Matter movement have caused me to reflect on the importance and purposes of this book. My reflections could not have occurred without many deep conversations about children, families, and race that I have had with my family—Nancy, Benjamin, Joseph, Caitlin, and Erin. My closest colleagues, Sudha Swaminathan and Julia DeLapp, have also inspired my thinking. Kwangwon Lee has helped me to better understand children with autism spectrum disorder and the importance of adult interactions in supporting their development. Conversations with him have influenced this book in ways he may never know. These individuals not only have provided important ideas but also have offered much emotional support during this time.

I must also thank individuals who have supported and nurtured this book from the very beginning. My mentor and friend, Kevin Davis, believed in me so long ago, supported and challenged my ideas, and helped me shape this book into something I am exceedingly proud of and that has, over the years, contributed to the early childhood profession. My faraway friend and colleague Patty Martinez-Meritt from Alaska and her students have provided so many wonderful ideas and suggestions for the book over the years. It would simply not be the same without her contributions. Finally, I want to thank Elsa Nuñez, the president of Eastern Connecticut State University—a visionary, a leader, and a warm, encouraging colleague—who has recognized, supported, and inspired my scholarship.

I'd like to thank, as well, the reviewers who provided suggestions for improving this eighth edition: Karen La Paro, University of North Carolina Greensboro, Mindi Reich-Shapiro, Borough of Manhattan CUNY, Kimberly Davidson, Central Michigan University, Tanya Pinkerton, Arizona State University.

Thank you to my Pearson team, Rebecca Fox-Gieg, Curtis Vickers, and Janelle Rogers, for their support and help.

Finally, I would like to thank the children and families whose interesting lives serve as the basis for the vignettes in the book: Benjamin, Joseph, Matthew, Meggie, Sam, Alex, Brenna, Haley, Emma, Callie, Wynn, Mac, Joey, and the children and families of the Child and Family Development Resource Center of Eastern Connecticut State University; the Hartford Public Schools; the Windham Public Schools; the Temple Early Childhood Education Center; the former John Marshall Elementary School in Louisville, Kentucky; the Christian Center Child Care Center in Bloomington, Indiana; the University of Minnesota Child Care Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Oak Grove Montessori School in Mansfield, Connecticut; and the preschool and kindergarten of the Universidad de Puerto Rico, Colegio Universitario Tecnologico de Bayamon, Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

Jeffrey Trawick-Smith

Brief Contents

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Chapter 1

Studying Early Childhood Development in a Diverse World

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Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1.1 Define early childhood development and explain how qualitative development is different from quantitative development.

1.2 Give examples of how views and treatment of children have changed over time and across historically underrepresented and Western cultural groups.

1.3 Describe ways that knowledge of early childhood development can guide classroom interactions, curriculum planning, the identification of children with disabilities, and understanding and appreciating cultural diversity.

1.4 Explain why teachers and other professionals should study child development from a multicultural perspective.

The purpose of this text is to assist present and future teachers of young children in using knowledge of child development within child care, preschool, kindergarten, and primary-grade classrooms. It is a practical guide to what young children are like and how this knowledge can be used to enhance your professional practice. My focus in this text is on diversity and development. I emphasize that individual children learn and behave in different ways. Children of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and those with challenging conditions and special needs vary in their language, social style, self-perceptions, and physical competence because of unique life experiences. I will describe and celebrate this diversity. A significant message is that there is not just one way to grow up. Understanding development and its cultural variations is essential for effective teaching, as the following story reveals:

> Three 4-year-olds—Sarah, Peter, and Alonzo—are working with clay at the art table in a child care center. Their teacher, Ms. Sekar, has placed individual balls of clay on small wooden boards so that each child can select one to work with. Knowing that children at this age have a difficult time sharing, she reasons that dividing the clay into individual portions will avert conflict. She quickly discovers, however, that her careful planning has just the opposite effect.
>
> Peter looks over with an expression of concern at Sarah's clay. "She's got more than me!" he complains to Ms. Sekar.
>
> "Oh, no, Peter, she doesn't," she assures him. "I put just the same amount of clay in all the balls. You have just as much as she does."
>
> Peter is not satisfied. "No! Hers is fatter!"
>
> Ms. Sekar notices that Sarah's clay ball is pushed flatter, giving it a wide appearance. "Oh! Hers is fatter, you're right. But yours is . . ."—she searches for the right word here—"taller." She sees immediately that this argument has gone over Peter's head.
>
> As Peter continues to protest, Alonzo discovers that he needs more clay for a sculpture he is working on. Smiling, he casually leans over and pinches off a large chunk from Peter's ball. Alonzo's actions are more than Peter can bear. "No!" he screams, beginning to cry and trying to grab back some of his clay from Alonzo. Alonzo gives a look of total surprise at Peter's outburst.
>
> After comforting Peter, Ms. Sekar engages all three children in an elaborate negotiation: "Peter seems to be upset because he doesn't have as much clay as everyone else. What can we do about this?"
>
> "Give me back my clay," Peter offers, still angry.
>
> "We could put all the clay together," Alonzo suggests. Sarah agrees.
>
> "We could try that," Ms. Sekar responds with enthusiasm. "We could make a huge ball. Then you could tear off the clay you need. What do you think?"
>
> "What if I can't have enough?" asks Peter tearfully.
>
> "There is so much clay," the teacher answers. "I think you'll have plenty to use. Should we try it?"
>
> Peter finally agrees. They combine their clay into one large chunk and place it in the center of the table. As the children work, they help themselves to more clay, as they need it. This seems to make everyone happy. Ms. Sekar is pleased at how cooperative these young children are in sharing from this "community" lump of clay.

This child care provider has resolved a classroom conflict by applying principles of child development. Because she has read about young children's thinking and social behavior, she is aware that 4-year-olds can be egocentric—that is, so self-oriented that they are unable to fully understand others' perspectives. Because she anticipates difficulties over sharing, she attempts to avoid conflicts by dividing the clay into individual balls. She quickly realizes, however, that she has created more problems than she has prevented.

She knows, again from child development research, that children's thinking is based on the appearance of things: What you see is what you get. From Peter's perspective, the ball that looks fatter must contain more clay. The caregiver immediately recognizes the futility of trying to convince him that the balls are of equal size.

In resolving the conflict between Alonzo and Peter, the teacher has relied on her knowledge of cultural diversity in child development. She knows that in Alonzo's family, sharing, working and playing together, and other collective behaviors are more common than individual activities and ownership. Alonzo's act of helping himself to others' clay is simply an innocent effort to share materials.

By involving the children in the resolution of this conflict, she has relied on new research showing that very young children can be quite cooperative and can resolve their own conflicts with adult assistance. Her final resolution to the problem reflects her knowledge of the intellectual and social abilities and limitations of this age group.

This example shows that child development research and theory can be extremely useful in the classroom when applied in concert with careful observation and the wisdom of experience.

What Is Early Childhood Development?

Learning Outcome 1.1 Define early childhood development and explain how qualitative development is different from quantitative development.

Anyone who spends time with children knows that they change in many ways as they grow older. What may not be as obvious is that these changes are qualitative as well as quantitative. Children do not simply acquire more knowledge, social ability, or physical proficiency with age; their thinking and behavior also become qualitatively different over time.

One way to understand qualitative change in development is to reflect on your own life experience. Think back to what you were like 10 years ago. Are you the same person? How have you changed? It is likely that you are quantitatively different: You have more knowledge, a broader repertoire of social skills, or even—like me—a few more gray hairs. But you are also likely to be qualitatively different. Your interests have probably changed. You probably solve problems differently or use new methods to learn. You may have a clearer picture of your career goals. Children also become very different human beings with each developmental period, as the following vignette illustrates:

Three-year-old Daisuke shows great anxiety every time the heater blower turns on in his child care center. His caregiver intervenes to help assuage his fears.

DAISUKE: I don't like that thing!

CAREGIVER: Yes. That heater is old and loud. It's just a heater, though. Let me show you. (Leads the child over to the heating unit) See? It's just a machine.

DAISUKE: Just an old machine.

CAREGIVER: That's right. Can you see down inside here? See the parts of the machine in there? That's what makes the noise.

DAISUKE: Yeah. The machine goes r-r-r-r. (Makes a blower noise)

CAREGIVER: Right. So when it comes on, you won't be afraid, right?

DAISUKE: Yeah.

Minutes later, the blower turns on again. Daisuke clings to the caregiver in terror.

Approximately a year later, the caregiver has another conversation about the blower with this same child.

DAISUKE: Remember that heater? (Points to the heating unit)

CAREGIVER: Sure. You didn't like the noise it made.

DAISUKE: I was afraid of it when I was little. I thought it was a… monster. (Laughs)

CAREGIVER: I remember that.

DAISUKE: It's just the machine inside that makes that awful racket!

Why is this child, at age 4, no longer afraid of the heater? It isn't just because he has more knowledge of how it works. Indeed, he learned a good deal about the heater from his caregiver when he was only 3. He could even verbalize that it was "just an old machine" that made a frightening noise. Yet his fear persisted. At age 4, he is able to think in a completely different way. His intellectual abilities have changed qualitatively as well as quantitatively. He is no longer completely fooled by how things look or sound (e.g., if the blower sounds like a monster, it must be a monster). He can now use a new kind of reasoning to overcome the misleading appearance of things (e.g., the blower may sound like a monster, but it is really a machine making noise).

In all areas of development, children gradually transform into unique individuals. At each stage, they pose new and fascinating challenges for parents and professionals. What we expect of them, how we interact with them, what we plan for them to do, and how we meet their social and emotional needs and those of their families are all influenced by a knowledge of these qualitative changes in development.

In this text, **development** is defined as the process by which humans change both qualitatively and quantitatively as they grow older. It is not just adding more knowledge or ability with time; it is the process of transforming, of becoming completely new. **Early childhood development** is defined as the development of children from conception and birth through age 8.

Historical Views and the Treatment of Children

Learning Outcome 1.2 Give examples of how views and treatment of children have changed over time and across historically underrepresented and Western cultural groups.

Early childhood development has not always been viewed in the same way over the years. Also, ideas about how children develop have varied from one part of the world to another. It is helpful for teachers and parents to learn about historical and cultural

viewpoints on children. Some of the ways that parents interact with their children may stem from cultural traditions of their own upbringing. Teachers may find that some of their own classroom practices are shaped by historical viewpoints. The ways they teach, respond to children's behavior, or plan their curriculum may be influenced by outdated views rather than current research.

Perspectives of Historically Underrepresented Groups

Numerous accounts have been written about how views of childhood have changed over the years. Many of these focus on perspectives in Western societies (Heywood, 2017; Mintz, 2017). However, beliefs and attitudes about children of some cultural groups have been largely ignored. In this book, we will refer to such groups as **historically underrepresented**. The views on childhood of some underrepresented groups are distinct, having been shaped by significant historical events and circumstances. For example, African families of centuries past faced hardships that led to the formation of strong kinship and tribal bonds. Families and communities banded together to survive. Adults showed a high degree of concern and caring toward children, as they did toward all members of their families and communities (Hale & Bocknek, 2015; Serpell, 2018). Mother–child relationships were especially strong in early Africa. This special bond between children and mothers is still an important element in African American family life (Maiello, 2016).

Early descriptions of Native American families also portray close familial and tribal ties (Adair & Braund, 2005; Stearns, 2015). Once again, these formed as a result of challenges to survival, including harsh treatment by Europeans when they arrived. Although great diversity exists among tribes, a theme woven through the ancient stories, family histories, art, and music of most Native American cultures is the interdependence among and respect for all living things. Children were a significant part of the natural order and, therefore, were highly cherished and protected. Communities and families adopted a clear division of labor and a sense of social responsibility. Child rearing was a collective endeavor performed by mothers and fathers, older tribal members, and older and even same-age children. Children were socialized from the earliest days to become part of a group, yet were afforded much opportunity for individual expression through art and music. Individual differences were accepted as part of the natural scheme. The high value placed on both social relationships and individual expression is fundamental to Native American life to this day (Allison-Burbank & Collins, 2020; Kulis et al., 2019).

Early attitudes toward children in China and Japan were influenced by the writings of Confucius (551–479 B.C.). Confucianism's focus on interpersonal harmony led to the belief in both societies that children are inherently good—a perspective that did not emerge in Europe until many centuries later. A respect for children can be found in descriptions of early Chinese and Japanese life. The education of children was a concern even in ancient times (Bedford & Yeh, 2019; J.R. McCarthy et al., 2017). Between the 16th and 19th centuries, Japanese and Chinese children were encouraged to learn through observation and imitation; question asking was valued. In the 18th century, Japanese philosopher Kaibara Ekken wrote that children should be guided in self-directed learning. He recommended only moderate amounts of punishment or reinforcement.

In China, as early as the 13th century, infancy was recognized as a unique period in development. According to Chinese philosopher Wang Zhong-Yang, the first 60 days of life were a "sensitive period." The emergence of smiling and walking represented

milestones in human growth. It was proposed that the strength of parent–child bonds could lead to a successful transition from infancy to childhood.

SLAVERY AND COLONIALISM. Views on childhood in some historically underrerpresented cultures were strongly influenced by early experiences with slavery and colonialism. Ogbu (2013) argued that the experience of oppression added a new dimension to the lives of some cultural groups generally and children in particular. As families were enslaved or tribes and communities were conquered, new parental values and child-rearing practices emerged by necessity (Láníková, 2019). The following vignette of an enslaved family in the American South prior to emancipation illustrates this:

> Ruth was captured and shipped from her home in Africa as a child and purchased by her owner in Charleston, South Carolina in 1826 to work on his plantation. She eventually had a child, Walter, whom she was allowed to name herself, something rarely allowed by slave owners. From birth, Walter was an active, bold child and, as he grew older and began to work in the fields, started getting into trouble with the overseer who found him to be disobedient and disrespectful.
>
> After Walter's second beating from the overseer, Ruth realized she would need to do something or her son would be traded away or even killed if he did not behave. "Walter, you need to settle down or they'll just take you away from me. You have to act right, you understand?"
>
> "Okay, momma," Walter said, but he was smiling and clearly did not appear to take Ruth's warning seriously.
>
> One day Walter was being loud and silly as he worked in the field and an overseer seized him by the arm and dragged him into a clump of trees where no one could hear or see them. Ruth was terrified and wondered if she would ever see her son again. When the two finally came out of the woods, Walter was crying, bleeding from his mouth, and one of his eyes was swelling shut.
>
> Ruth was a gentle, loving mother, but she needed to be more firm in order to protect her child. From then on, she would reprimand Walter harshly for any minor misstep he made. She used a switch to whip the back of his legs anytime he was badly misbehaving. He would cry and beg her to stop, but Ruth knew if she did not punish Walter severely herself, he would be beaten more severely by the owner, killed, or traded away.
>
> When Walter grew up and had his own children, he adopted his mother's strict methods of discipline, even using a switch on them when they misbehaved. Even after emancipation, the Jim Crow era in the deep South posed great dangers for former enslaved children. "Momma would whoop me," Walter would tell his own children, "and I do the same to you, because I love you."

In the vignette, Ruth adopts a discipline method that many would find troubling. Yet her fear of harm or trade by cruel slave owners led her to use such strict parenting. To this day, individuals from some oppressed cultural groups have adopted a very firm style of parenting in an effort to keep their children safe. There are several other ways that oppression has affected children and families (Coll & Magnuson, 2019; Henry et al., 2019), which will be explored throughout the book. A summary of these is presented in Table 1.1.

As shown in Table 1.1, families who were of oppressed cultures became more **collective** in their thinking and action. Family and nonfamily members banded

Table 1.1 The Influences of Oppression on the Lives of Children and Families

Characteristics of Historically Oppressed Families	Example
Collectivism	Persons of historically oppressed groups more often have lived in extended families, which include parents, grandparents, and even aunts and uncles.
	Family members have often pooled resources and sacrificed individual goals for the good of the family. Collective child care has been common.
	Neighbors and "friends who are like family" have banded together in the face of adversity.
	Children have been taught "enmeshment"—strong attachment to family and culture.
Firm and directive parenting	Parents of historically underrepresented groups often have directly regulated children's behavior in an effort to protect them from the dangers of racism and physical violence.
	Children have been encouraged to be obedient and not to "talk back" to those in authority—particularly slaveholders or powerful members of the dominant culture, such as police officers.
Valuing or devaluing Western education	Some children of historically oppressed groups have been urged to "exceed white children" in their achievement in Western schools.
	Some children of historically oppressed groups have been taught to reject the learning and values of Western schools.

together, often pooling resources and sharing caregiving tasks. For example, Puerto Rican families of the late 19th century became increasingly close-knit and mutually supportive as they adapted to the conditions of social and economic injustice of the time (Offer, 2020). Strong kinship bonds were formed and extended beyond family lines. Early practices such as *compadrazgo* (coparenting by relatives and nonrelatives) and *hijos de crianza* (informal adoption of children by nonfamily members) reflected a commitment to shared child rearing among all community members. Close friendships among individuals living in proximity to one another were common. The phrase *como de la familia* (like one of the family) is used to this day to refer to these special mutually supportive nonfamily relationships.

Similar kinship relationships were formed in African American culture during slavery (Hale & Bocknek, 2015). Nonfamily adults played a role in child rearing, particularly when families were separated by the sale of parents or by a slaveholder's death. To this day, African American parents and children connect with nonfamily neighbors or members of the church or community—called **fictive kin**—in order to support one another (Curry & McIntosh, 2020). There is a well-known saying to describe this: "A strong desire exists among Black people to be related to each other" (Hale-Benson, 1986, p. 16).

As shown in Table 1.1, and illustrated in the vignette, child-rearing techniques are affected as a result of oppression (Coll & Magnuson, 2019). Like Ruth, some parents often adopted **firm and directive socialization practices** to protect their children from dangers in the world. African American parents, for example, needed to restrict their children's actions to avoid the terrible dangers of the Jim Crow South, where assaults or lynchings were common (Ritterhouse, 2018). They would encourage children to mature before their time, controlling emotional expression and reining in unruly behaviors that might get them into trouble. Even today, some parents adopt strict

discipline methods to protect their children from dangers related to gangs, drugs, and conflicts with police in some communities (Bobo, 2020).

An interesting example of how parenting methods have been influenced by oppression is how Plains Indians, during western expansion and the genocide of Indigenous people, taught young children—even infants—not to cry. This was an adaptive practice designed to keep children from giving away their location when hiding from invading soldiers. Keeping children under control was, again, a necessity for survival among Native American cultures (Tafoya & Del Vecchio, 2005).

Beliefs about children's education and success in the dominant culture were also affected by colonization and slavery, as shown in Table 1.1. In some cultures, oppression led to **valuing Western education** and academic achievement within the dominant society. Hale & Bocknek (2015) notes a strong achievement orientation among African American families. Since the time of emancipation, parents have encouraged their children to be ambitious and hardworking and to "exceed white children's behavior and performance" (p. 48). In other cultures, a **devaluing of Western education** occurred, in which families rejected mainstream paths to success. To this day, some Native American families have encouraged children to reject the values and practices of schools of the dominant culture (Jacob, 2018; Whitesell et al., 2006). These families tend to focus instead on teaching competencies that are more highly valued in Native American tradition. Although this devaluing of Western American education may seem worrisome, a classic study by Lefley (1976) found that children of Seminole and Miccosukee tribes had significantly higher self-esteem when they were discouraged by families from being acculturated into the dominant society and were socialized to more highly value Native American perspectives on learning and education.

Western Perspectives on Childhood

Western views of childhood have also been influenced by historical events and beliefs (Heywood, 2017). Until the Middle Ages, adults in Western cultures had no real concept of early childhood. Children were considered to be infants until they were 6 or 7 years of age—nonpersons who were sometimes uncared for and unwanted. They died in great numbers during this time, many at birth. Infanticide was not uncommon through the 17th century; healthy and unhealthy infants were drowned or abandoned. Once children reached the age of 7, they were often viewed as little adults. This perspective is reflected in the paintings of earlier centuries. Children are often shown with mature adult faces, sitting calmly and piously alongside adult family members (Endrődy-Nagy, 2016). With this perception came the expectation that children would behave like grown-ups. This attitude lingers among some adults to this day. High expectations for "proper" classroom behavior or unrealistic learning goals in early childhood are examples.

During the Renaissance in Western society, children came to be viewed, for the first time, as distinctly different human beings. Parents became preoccupied, however, with rooting out "inherent evil" (Heywood, 2017). Children were believed to have been born "bad," and it was the role of adults to train them in the teachings of the church and to "beat the devil out of them" when they strayed. This belief that children are innately immoral persisted through the 18th century. Harsh training and a focus on

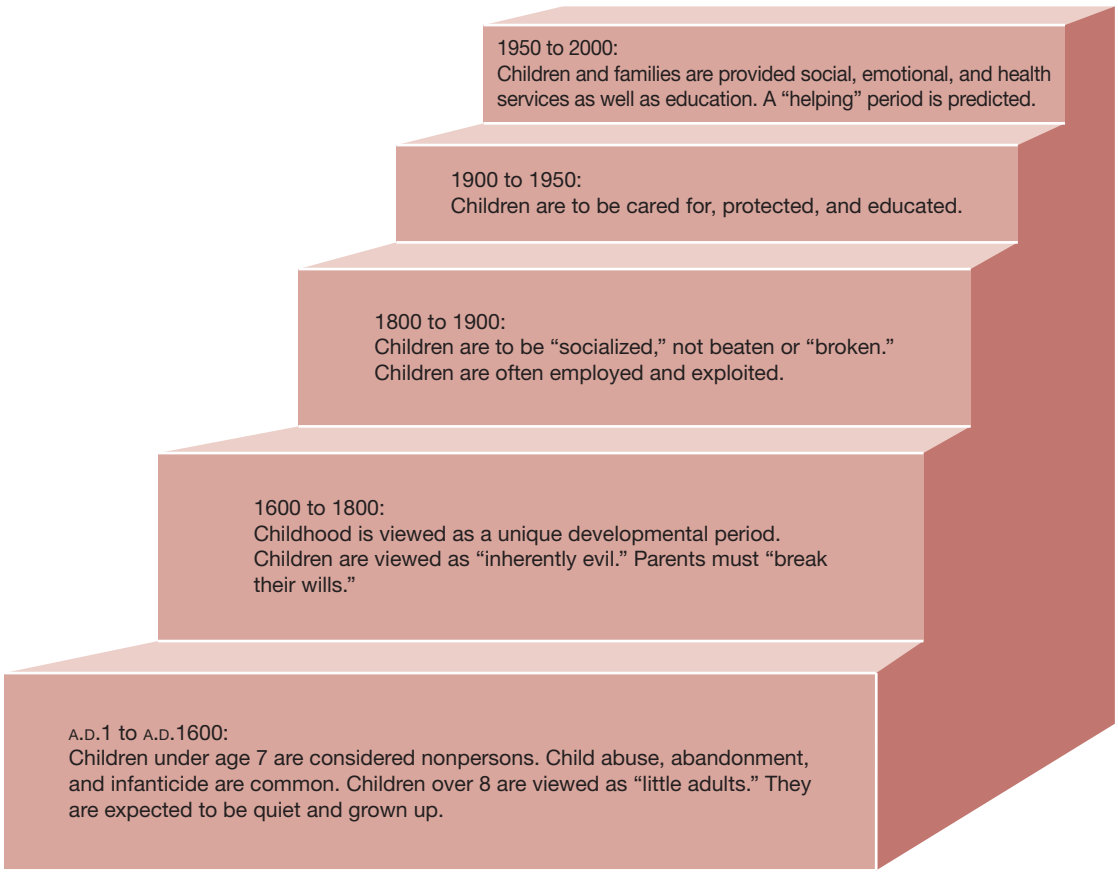
"breaking the will" of children can be seen even today among some misguided parents and teachers.

In Europe and the United States, the 19th and 20th centuries were periods of relative enlightenment in regard to the treatment of children. A new emphasis was placed on socialization, rather than conquering or taming children. Public schools and eventually child care programs were established to socialize children in every aspect of development. Improvements in health care led to a drastic reduction in childhood mortality. The late 20th century, generally, brought a growing concern for children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs. Western perspectives on childhood throughout history are presented in Figure 1.1, which shows that caring and concern for children have been relatively recent historical phenomena in Europe and America.

A New Trauma-Informed View of Childhood?

The "period of helping," shown in Figure 1.1, appears to end at the year 2000. This is because there has been a growing awareness since that time that some children's well-being is in growing jeopardy. A large number of American children have faced

Figure 1.1 A history of perspectives on children in Western cultures is presented. The figure shows that caring and concern for children is a relatively new phenomenon in the United States and Europe.



ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY

Addressing Problems Faced by America's Children

As discussed in this chapter, historians report that in the late 20th century we entered a "period of helping" in which adults in our society began to recognize and fully meet the needs of children. Many Americans, including community leaders, believe that children are still faring quite well in our country. However, research does not support such a positive view (Edelman, 2018). Professionals can play an important role in raising public awareness of the many ongoing problems faced by young children in our country: poor health care, malnutrition, low academic achievement, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including abuse and neglect. A message to be conveyed to the public is that we have a long way to go in fully meeting the needs of America's children.

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a national program that advocates for children's well-being. As stated in their mission, they strive to ensure that "every child has a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start, and a moral start in life" (CDF, 2020b). For fifty years the group has engaged in a variety of advocacy activities to remind community leaders and policymakers that the nation's priority must always be its children. They conduct research and publish reports to inform the public of challenges facing children and families and to promote legislation to ameliorate these. They write policy proposals to address child poverty, health and welfare, early childhood education, and the prevention of community and family violence. For example, they advocated successfully for passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act that would assist agencies in keeping children who are abused with their families or in family-like settings if foster care is needed. They have played an ongoing role in advocating for increases in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to adequately meet the nutritional needs of children in poverty.

The CDF offers a variety of direct services to communities, as well. They have established Freedom Schools in twenty-eight states that provide high-quality educational programs after school and during the summer to reduce children's "summer learning loss." These schools involve communities and families in culturally-responsive curriculum planning and offer opportunities for recent college graduates to work with children in poverty in these innovative programs. The CDF organizes the annual Children's Sabbaths Celebration, a day in October in which places of worship of all faiths around the country set aside their usual period of worship to reflect on and share knowledge about issues facing children in the community. Planning advocacy to address these problems is part of these gatherings.

Professionals working with children find the Children's Defense Fund an invaluable resource for learning more about the needs of children and families, obtaining new ideas to support their work, and communicating and collaborating with other agencies and organizations in promoting child welfare (www.childrensdefense.org).

trauma, which is defined as an experience that causes actual or threatened physical or emotional harm and that completely overwhelms a child's ability to develop in a healthy way (Temkin et al., 2020). Many believe that such trauma has always existed in some communities—particularly for children living in poverty—and that a "new era of child trauma" is really the result of more extensive research and a growing understanding of this ongoing problem. The contributions of trauma to a wide range of childhood emotional and learning difficulties and its damaging effects that last into adulthood have now been documented. Professionals—including teachers—are now screening for indicators of traumatic experience (Merrick et al., 2017).

There are many types of trauma—clinically called **adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**—that children experience. These vary in prevalence and severity of their

effects (Merrick et al., 2017). Between 40% and 60% of children in the United States face at least one ACE. Children of color and those living in poverty are most likely to experience such trauma (Maguire-Jack et al., 2020). Child abuse and neglect are among the most harmful ACEs, followed closely in impact by intimate partner or other family violence. Witnessing community violence can also have a significant negative effect on child development. Other ACEs that cause varying levels of harm, depending on circumstances, are divorce, incarceration of a parent, food insecurity, or homelessness.

Children who face an ACE are more likely to show **externalizing problems**—outward negative behaviors such as acting out or aggression—or **internalizing problems** (inward-directed problems such as social withdrawal or depression) in school (Hunt et al., 2017). What is most concerning is that 25% of children are exposed to multiple ACEs, which have a cumulative damaging effect on child development (Liming & Grube, 2018). How will our nation rise to remediate the challenges of childhood trauma? Will threats to funding of schools, family services, and nutritional programs due to economic crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic, erode even further our children's emotional and physical well-being? Or will a new **trauma-informed perspective** on childhood emerge, in which citizens and policymakers recognize these harmful childhood influences and commit to addressing them to support our most vulnerable children?

Why Study Early Childhood Development?

Learning Outcome 1.3 Describe ways that knowledge of early childhood development can guide classroom interactions, curriculum planning, the identification of children with disabilities, and understanding and appreciating cultural diversity.

We have now defined early childhood development and noted how the perspectives about and treatment of children have varied over time and across cultures. The focus of this section is on why studying early childhood development is important for teachers and other professionals who are working with young children. In other words: Why should you read this text? Table 1.2 presents five ways that it can guide your professional practice.

A Guide to Interactions with Children

We know that young children think and act differently from adults. They use a different form of language, interact with other people in distinct ways, and apply unique meanings to social events. The things that make them worry, cry, or laugh are unique and sometimes unpredictable. Their interests and motivations are peculiar to their developmental level. They have a great need to yell and run and play, to throw things, and to joke and giggle with peers. Without a deep understanding of what young children are like, adults will have difficulty communicating with and comforting them, challenging their thinking, and helping them solve problems with peers. The

Table 1.2 Five Ways This Text Can Guide Professional Practice

The text can guide	Example
Interactions with children	A teacher learns that the preschool years are a period of magical thinking and irrational fears. So, when a 4-year-old shows anxiety about going onto the playground, the teacher understands the source of the problem and designs a sympathetic, cognitive-based strategy to alleviate the child's fear.
Curriculum planning	A teacher is designing a science activity to teach about seeds in a primary-grade classroom. He reads in Chapter 14 that most children of this age enjoy playing games with rules, so he develops a science board game. He also reads that there are cultural differences in regard to competition, so he designs the game so that all children win and competition is minimized.
Observation and identification of children with special needs	Based on information in Chapter 9, an infant caregiver accurately identifies a 7-month-old who has not become securely attached to her parents. Guided by research, she implements a warmth and responsiveness strategy to help the child bond to others.
Understanding and appreciation of diversity	A primary-grade teacher plans to have children read independent research reports to the whole class. However, he reads in Chapter 16 that children of some culture groups express themselves using a storytelling style. So, he gives students an option of telling the group about their projects.
Advocacy and the shaping of public policy	A kindergarten teacher is concerned about the problem of bullying on the playground and in the school bus. Citing research from Chapter 13 showing that this negative social behavior forms very early in life, she advocates for a preschool to grade 12 antibullying program at a local school board meeting.

following story shows how a thorough and sympathetic understanding of childhood can enhance professional practice:

> Janny and Molly are playing together in the block area of a kindergarten classroom. Janny has just knocked down Molly's block structure, causing great upset. The teacher quickly moves over to the area as a loud conflict ensues.
>
> MOLLY: (Crying) Janny, you kicked my building. I'm going to kick yours! (Angrily kicks at Janny's blocks)
>
> JANNY: No! (Begins to cry and pushes Molly)
>
> TEACHER: (Moving between the two children) Oh! You are both so angry. What's up here?
>
> MOLLY: She knocked down my building. (Screaming at Janny) I hate you!
>
> JANNY: (Crying, speaking to the teacher) She pushed me!
>
> MOLLY: You knocked over my building, Janny!
>
> TEACHER: (To Molly) I know you must be so upset. You worked very hard on that building.
>
> MOLLY: And Janny knocked it down.
>
> TEACHER: Yes. But she wasn't trying to, were you Janny?
>
> JANNY: No. And she just pushed me.
>
> TEACHER: (To Janny) Well, she was very angry. (To Molly) I don't think Janny meant to knock down your building. Sometimes these accidents happen. What can we do here?
>
> MOLLY: Well… Janny has to build it.
>
> TEACHER: (To Janny) Can you help Molly rebuild her building?
>
> JANNY: Okay. And maybe we could make a queen's castle.
>
> MOLLY: (In an enthusiastic tone) All right.

In responding to this conflict, the teacher has applied an understanding of the unique ways children interpret and solve social problems. She knows that young children sometimes assign hostile intent when accidents occur. Molly truly believes that Janny intended to destroy her block structure. Instead of reprimanding Molly for pushing, then, the teacher acknowledges how angry and upset she must be. She also points out to Molly that the toppling of the blocks was accidental. She knows that helping a child read social situations more accurately will promote positive social development.

This caregiver also applies knowledge of how very young children resolve conflicts. She keeps Janny involved in the discussion, aware that children are often able to settle their own disputes with adult assistance. She also knows that anger toward peers rarely lasts long at this age. Indeed, within a short period of time, the two children have worked out a reconciliation. Had the teacher quickly separated these angry children, a wonderful opportunity for learning conflict resolution skills would have been missed.

A Guide to Curriculum Planning

The ideas presented in this text can also guide curriculum planning. A full understanding of the thinking and behavior of young children is critical in developing activities and materials that are appropriate for this age group. Overlooking developmental characteristics can lead to an inappropriate curriculum, or what classic child development theorist Brian Sutton-Smith (1999) referred to as "cognitive child labor." Classrooms that present young children with taxing, passive, and overly abstract academic activities still exist. Such classrooms do not reflect a knowledge of child development.

The following vignette illustrates how a teacher's understanding of typical and atypical child development enhances the curriculum:

> A preschool teacher sets out trays of cornmeal for children to play with. They can draw in the cornmeal, wipe away their marks, and draw again. A child who is experiencing delayed development of large motor skills is attempting to join another child in this activity. As he tries to draw, he knocks the tray to the floor, and the cornmeal spills out. His peer expresses concern.
>
> RUBEY: Look! He spilled it all out!
>
> TAYLOR: (Looks down, says nothing)
>
> TEACHER: Oops! That tray slides off the table so easily.
>
> RUBEY: He knocked it!
>
> TEACHER: It was an accident. I have that problem sometimes. I've knocked things off a slippery table. What can we do to attach the tray so it doesn't slide?
>
> TAYLOR: Glue it, I think.
>
> TEACHER: Well, then the tray would stay stuck forever. How about if I clamp it? (She retrieves a metal clamp from the woodworking area, clamps the tray to the table, and adds more cornmeal.) There. Try that.
>
> The two children draw in the cornmeal for many minutes without further spills.

Here the teacher has provided an appropriate learning material that reflects an understanding of young children's development. The activity is concrete and open ended and, therefore, meets the learning needs of children of this age. The activity also reflects an understanding that end products are not as important to young children

as the process of creating. A positive feature of the cornmeal activity is that children can create and re-create many times without being concerned about their finished products.

Based on observations and an understanding of the development of children with special needs, the teacher has quickly assessed that Taylor's motor limitations make this activity inaccessible to him. Her knowledge of motor development has sensitized her to developmental delays and has guided her adaptation of materials to meet his special needs.

A Guide to Observing Children and Identifying Special Needs

Observation is the cornerstone of effective teaching. Teachers and child care providers usually base intervention and curriculum planning decisions on the careful observation of children's developmental needs. This text assists professionals in observing children. It suggests key areas of development to study and describes the diverse behaviors and characteristics that can be expected at various developmental levels. In addition, it guides teachers in identifying children with special needs. Certain behaviors suggest developmental delay or at-risk status. An infant who displays very little motor activity, a preschooler who is limited in language, or an elementary school child who is rejected by peers may require special intervention. Focused observation not only can identify these potential problems but also can suggest causes and remediation.

In the following example, a caregiver uses child development research to identify a child with special needs:

> A 5-month-old has just been enrolled in a child care center. Her caregiver spends much time observing her during her first few days. He notices that the infant is less alert and responsive to adult contact than the other babies. He has read that this is an age when most infants show great interest in other people. He expects to see much smiling, cooing, and other social behaviors.
>
> He knows that social interaction varies across cultures. For example, in some families, babies are held or spoken to less often. However, babies of all cultures have some mechanism for making contact with other people, and this infant does not respond at all to his efforts to interact.
>
> The caregiver discusses his concerns with the infant's parents. Together they seek assistance from a medical/social service team in the community. An assessment reveals that the infant has a hearing impairment. With this information, the caregiver can adapt interactions to meet the child's special needs. He focuses more on physical and visual stimulation, using touch more than language to make contact.

A Guide to Understanding and Appreciating Diversity

This text can also help teachers recognize and appreciate the wide variety of behaviors and characteristics that are typical among a given group of children. A fundamental message of the text is that no two children are alike. Behaviors and characteristics vary because of temperament, culture, gender, socioeconomic status, and a host of other factors. Children are not deficient or at risk because they develop in unique directions. They may display alternative ways of interacting with the world because of their life experience.

Knowledge of child development ultimately helps teachers to be sensitive to typical variations in child behavior, as the following story reveals:

A 5-year-old Japanese American child, Misaka, has just been pushed off a tire swing on the playground at school. After discussing the event with the child who was being aggressive, the teacher attempts to comfort the victim.

TEACHER: Are you all right, Misaka?

MISAKA: (Smiles broadly, says nothing)

TEACHER: It looks like you're okay. Did you get hurt?

MISAKA: (Continues to smile, still does not speak)

TEACHER: Something doesn't seem quite right here. Why don't we sit together for a few minutes and relax. (Pulls the child onto her lap)

After several minutes of sitting together, Misaka begins to speak to the teacher.

MISAKA: (Tears forming in his eyes) He pushed me off.

TEACHER: Yes. I'll bet that hurt.

MISAKA: (In an angry tone) I don't like him!

TEACHER: You really sound angry. Let's talk about this a little.

The teacher and Misaka quietly discuss the incident until playground time is over.

Initially, this teacher misreads Misaka's smile as a sign that he is happy and unaffected by the aggression. She then remembers that smiling can mean different things in different cultures. In some Japanese American families, a smile is used to conceal embarrassment, sorrow, or anger. The teacher wisely stays with and nurtures the child until he is ready to express his feelings.

A Guide to Advocacy and the Shaping of Public Policy

Many teachers and caregivers see their professional roles as extending beyond the four walls of their classrooms (Schmit, 2020). They recognize that they must bring about change in the community and the larger society in order to improve the lives of children and families. Often, they become advocates who lobby policymakers, write letters to the editors of their local newspapers, participate in political action groups, or campaign for candidates who support programs for children. This text serves as a guide for such advocacy. Research and theories cited in these chapters show that working to improve community services and to influence public policy will have a direct impact on children's development. Each chapter presents ideas for advocacy and the shaping of public policy to benefit children and families.

In the following vignette, a teacher uses his knowledge of children's physical development and health to support important legislation:

A second-grade teacher is concerned about one of his students, Giovanny, who has been suffering persistent illnesses, including an ear infection that comes and goes. The teacher is aware that illness is a leading cause of children missing school and, thus, falling behind in their learning. He knows that this is a particular problem for children who live in poverty, like Giovanny. If Giovanny remains unhealthy, his learning and development will be seriously impaired.

The teacher talks with Giovanny's mother, a single parent, about the problem and is startled by her response.

MOTHER: I just try to keep Giovanny in bed so he can get better. That's all I can do when he gets sick.

TEACHER: He really needs to see a doctor.

MOTHER: I can't afford a doctor for every little thing.

TEACHER: But this is pretty serious. These ear infections, especially.

MOTHER: I don't have any insurance. And the state says I make too much money to get any help from them.

TEACHER: Isn't there a special state program?

MOTHER: Yeah, there was, but they took that away.

The teacher is surprised. Surely Giovanny's mother doesn't make so much from her low-paying job that her family can't receive free medical services. On investigating, he learns Giovanny's mother is correct. The new governor in the state, in an effort to address a budget deficit, has pushed for an end to the "Healthy Kids" program that provides health insurance for children of the working poor.

The teacher organizes a campaign among colleagues and parents in the school to reinstate this program. They call legislators, attend a public hearing, and write letters to the local newspaper. One of their most powerful arguments is that illness can undermine goals for education in the state—goals that the governor champions. Absences will affect achievement test scores and threaten state and federal mandates for school improvement, they point out. With the help of similar groups throughout the state, they eventually succeed. The legislature overwhelmingly votes to reinstate the program, with the governor's support.

This teacher is inspired to take action by his knowledge that illness is a serious threat to learning and development. He uses research on poor health, absence, and school success to convince the legislators that providing health insurance for all children will help meet a politically popular goal.

Why Study Early Childhood Development from a Multicultural Perspective?

Learning Outcome 1.4 Explain why teachers and other professionals should study child development from a multicultural perspective.

During the 21st century, children of traditionally underrepresented groups—often called minorities—will constitute a new majority within the United States. Currently, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans constitute one-third of the U.S. population. It is projected that, by mid-century, they will account for more than half (Sohoni, 2020). Because families of these ethnic backgrounds are generally younger than those of other cultural groups, their children will represent a growing percentage of the preschool and school-age population. As families become more diverse, child and family professionals must be prepared to meet their unique needs.

Children of different cultures vary in the ways they communicate and interact with adults and peers (Guan & Li, 2017), in how they play and learn (Hale, 2016; Hou et al., 2020; Trawick-Smith, 2020), and in how they view teachers and school (Huguley et al., 2018; Peterson et al., 2018). As discussed previously, parental socialization practices and beliefs vary markedly across cultures (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2020; Y. Zhang et al., 2020). Professionals must come to understand, appreciate, and show sensitivity to these differences as they interact with children and families. They must devise ways to provide their students with knowledge of people of other cultures and with positive and significant cross-cultural experiences.

Unfortunately, children of color are sometimes underrepresented or misrepresented in child development research (Trawick-Smith, 2020; Tseng et al., 2016). Many studies are still conducted with only White, middle-class English-speaking children. Some textbooks and articles on children and families have been found to reflect a White American bias in which the behaviors and characteristics of that specific cultural background are considered the norm. Some White American teachers hold expectations for children that reflect their own values, behaviors, and learning styles.

A major purpose of this text is to help professionals appreciate that many developmental variations are, in fact, differences that can be explained by life experience. These differences are quite often adaptive. Distinct behavior, language, and learning patterns of children of a particular cultural group are acquired for a reason (McLoyd, 2006; Trawick-Smith, 2019). They help the child get along in his or her family and community and are valued, expected, and encouraged by parents, other adults, and peers. Behaviors that vary from those of children in mainstream society may be very typical within the child's own cultural milieu. In this text, great care has been taken to differentiate between developmental disabilities—real, special needs that can and should be addressed through intervention—and cultural differences—variations in development that are part of the rich cultural history of children and families.

It is common to confuse groups of children of different backgrounds or abilities. For example, some assume, without thinking, that children of color are the same as children living in poverty. A dual language learner who is just learning English might be considered one who has a language deficit. These are erroneous assumptions that can lead to bias. Table 1.3 presents terms that will be used in this book to help differentiate children and families with specific characteristics and backgrounds that will be discussed.

This terminology is important for teachers and other professionals to learn. It is easy to refer to a particular group in a way that deeply offends families or children. For example it would be exceedingly offensive to confuse "children of color," an acceptable phrase, with "colored children," which is a highly pejorative term. Referring to children with disabilities as "autistic children" or "deaf children" suggests that the condition is what defines them completely, rather than that they are individuals who also *have* a particular condition. Some express frustration with the importance placed on specific words—particularly when terminology for groups of people changes and falls in and out of favor. However, for teachers who are trying to establish positive trusting relationships with families and communities of diverse backgrounds, the words that are used are extremely important.

Table 1.3 Terms for Children and Families of Distinct Backgrounds and Abilities That Will Be Used in This Book.

Term	Description
Race	Refers to a group of people that are genetically connected, with similar physical characteristics, such as skin color or hair texture, and who often share a common place of origin in the world. For example, the term *Black* is used to identify those who are of African descent.
Culture/Ethnicity	A socially-defined category of people who adopt the same beliefs, traditions, family practices, or world views, not always related to race. For example, many Jamaican families may be considered Black, racially, but also share a distinct set of practices—music, religion, language, gender roles—that are unique to the island or other Jamaican neighborhoods.
Children/Families of Color; Historically Underrepresented Groups	Broad terms (perhaps overly broad!) to refer to any group that is not of White, European, or American cultural background and who are more likely to have been disenfranchised or oppressed by a dominant culture. Considered a more acceptable term than "minorities" or "non-Whites." The terms are not necessarily related to skin color. Some consider Asian American families to be people of color.
Socioeconomic Status (SES)	A measure of a family's overall economic and social status, determined by income, level of education, place of residence, and occupation of primary wage earners. Low SES indicates that a child and family live in poverty. SES is not related to race or culture (e.g., Native American families can be of low or high SES). Low SES children should not be assumed to have disabilities (e.g., not all children in poverty perform poorly in school).
Dual Language Learners (DLLs)	Children who are just learning the dominant language of society, which is also used in the classroom, but often speak a different language within their family. DLLs vary in the degree of proficiency and exposure to the dominant language. Most often their home language is Spanish, but it may also be any one of over 400 other languages used by families in the United States.
Sex	A term to refer to the biological characteristics that a person is born with.
Gender	A socially-constructed characteristic that is defined by culture and by an individual's self-identification. Gender is not necessarily related to the sex that persons are assigned at birth, but to what they identify with in life.
Disabilities/Special Needs	Persons with identified physical, intellectual, or social and emotional challenges that can interfere substantially with the ability to carry out day-to-day activities. These are appropriately described in a "person-first" manner (e.g., child with autism, not autistic child). Many children with disabilities have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that prescribe special education services. Some children with disabilities, who do not qualify for special education, have a 504 Plan that specifies certain accommodations in the classroom.

Summary

Development is a process by which humans change qualitatively and quantitatively over time. Early childhood development occurs between conception and eight years of life. Views of early childhood and the ways children have been treated have changed over the centuries and across cultures. These views have been shaped by adversity and oppression. Some attitudes about children today are the result of historical events. A concern has been raised today that the United States has entered a period of childhood trauma, in which challenging life events, like family and community violence, addiction, or divorce, jeopardize healthy development.

A knowledge of child development helps professionals interact with young children in effective ways, plan curriculum, observe and identify students with special needs, understand and appreciate cultural diversity, and participate in advocacy and the shaping of public policy. Studying child development from a multicultural perspective is important because the United States is becoming more diverse and there are cultural variations in the ways children think, learn, play, interact, and communicate. To support the development of young children, teachers must learn the many traditions, beliefs, world views, behaviors, and learning and communication styles of children they work with. This includes learning and using words and phrases to refer to groups of children and families in an acceptable and respectful way.

Applying Chapter Ideas

How Quickly Children Develop in Only Two Years

Visit a preschool or child development classroom that serves children from 3 to 5 years of age. Spend a full morning observing a 3-year-old and a 5-year-old participating in all classroom activities—indoor play, whole-group activities, snack, and outdoor time. Take careful notes. Later, write a paper in which you describe at least five specific areas in which the two children demonstrate different behaviors or abilities. Be sure to consider social interactions, learning, language, and overall classroom behavior. In a final paragraph, discuss what you learned about the qualitative changes of children between the ages of 3 and 5.

Questions To Ponder . . .

The two children you observed are not only physically different but also think and behave in qualitatively different ways. Were you able to observe how the older child, compared to the younger:

1. Interacts and collaborates more fully with peers?
2. Uses more complex words and sentences when communicating ideas?
3. Remains more attentive and engaged in group activities?
4. Solves problems in more significant ways?
5. Moves with greater coordination and displays complex outdoor play skills?

Were you able to conclude that there are qualitative differences in thinking, interacting, and behaving, even in this very short span of development?

Research Into Practice

Critical Concept 1

Development is defined as the process by which humans change as they grow older. This change is not just quantitative in nature; humans do not just acquire more knowledge and ability, but they change qualitatively as well. At each stage, humans think, behave, and perceive the world very differently.

Application #1 Assess qualitative changes in your students over time, not just quantitative increases in knowledge as measured by formal assessments. Observe how children solve math problems or think through scientific experiments, for example. You will learn more about development than if you check only to see if children get the right answer.

Application #2 Provide classroom experiences that help children think, interact with peers, and feel good about themselves. Activities that merely focus on learning facts may not promote qualitative aspects of development.

Critical Concept 2

Throughout history, views and treatment of children have evolved. These changes have been most often documented in Western countries and cultures. However, the changes in perspectives and practices of historically under-represented groups (e.g., African, Chinese, Japanese, or Native American cultures) have been quite different. Such experiences as oppression and slavery have influenced views of childhood in some cultures.

Application #1 Study the histories of childhood for many different cultures and countries and apply this knowledge to your observations, interactions, and practices of children of these diverse backgrounds. For example, plan group learning experiences, based on knowledge of the collective social traditions of some Native American families.

Application #2 Avoid judgement or conflict with families who hold different views of discipline or child rearing from your own. Learn the historical roots of these cultural views and take these into account when planning parent involvement and education programs.

Critical Concept 3

Western perspectives on childhood have also changed throughout history. Historical accounts in Western societies portray children as being treated poorly in

early centuries but cared for more compassionately in modern society.

Application #1 Become a historian in your own field by studying how viewpoints on learning and development have evolved over time. In so doing, you can borrow from the rich traditions of great thinkers and early practitioners, and can discover and better understand the historical roots of many current classroom beliefs and practices.

Application #2 Reflect on the historical origins of your own perspectives and classroom methods. Identify any strategies you use that are based on outdated beliefs about children. Traditional practices such as the "sit still and listen" approach, for example, are based on old views of childhood and should be modified or abandoned in favor of newer strategies.

Critical Concept 4

In spite of improvement in the treatment of children in Western societies in recent times, a new concern has emerged about childhood trauma. Children are now experiencing one or more traumatic experiences—called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Children of color and those living in poverty are more likely to exposed to more multiple ACEs.

Application #1 Learn the causes and indicators of ACEs and screen for the effects of trauma in your students and their families. Study and apply trauma-informed strategies to support children.

Application #2 Assist families in accessing social, nutritional, and health care, and mental health services in a time of scarce community resources. Without support in these areas, children will become more deeply affected by trauma and cannot learn and develop in classrooms.

Application #3 Become an advocate for policies and programs that provide children and their families with adequate trauma-informed services. Political action is an important role of modern early childhood educators.

Critical Concept 5

Since the American population is becoming more diverse, it is important for professionals to study child development from a multicultural perspective. Children of different cultures vary in the ways they communicate and interact with adults and peers, in how they play and learn, and in how they view teachers and school. Parenting practices and beliefs vary across cultures as well.

Application #1 Adapt your interactions and the activities you plan for children to meet unique cultural needs. Based on research on developmental diversity, you can create culturally sensitive classrooms by modifying learning experiences, classroom management strategies, communication styles, methods of assessment, and modes of interacting with parents and families.

Application #2 Be cautious in assessing the needs of young children, carefully differentiating between cultural differences and true developmental deficits. Understand and celebrate cultural differences; avoid trying to change these. You should address true developmental deficits only through intervention or referral to specialists.

Application #3 Monitor your own attitudes and beliefs to guard against false assumptions about children. Young children of color do not always live in poverty. Children in poverty do not always have special needs. Such sweeping conclusions can lead to ineffective and insensitive caregiving and teaching. Use acceptable and respectful terms when referring to various cultural groups.

Chapter 2

Research and Assessment in Early Childhood Development

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Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

2.1 Describe the major types of child development research and give examples of both experimental and correlational studies.

2.2 Identify the differences between summative, formative, quantitative, and qualitative types of assessment of young children.

2.3 Discuss the purposes of screening instruments and explain concerns raised about these assessments for children of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

This chapter examines a variety of research and assessment methods used to study the development of young children. These topics are of great practical importance to teachers. Both research and assessment findings can directly influence adult–child interactions in the home and classroom. The following story shows how the findings of research investigations can affect a classroom practice.

A student teacher, Stephen, has planned a small-group activity for a preschool class. However, as he begins, he encounters an unanticipated difficulty. One of the children will not stay seated in the circle he has created. She continues to jump up, talk in a loud voice, and stand in front of other children so that they cannot see.

"Susan, you need to sit down," he says. She sits quietly for a moment or two, but as he continues, she jumps up again.

"Look!" she cries out. "There are monkeys up in the tree! My other teacher read this!"

"Susan, if you can't sit quietly, I'll have to move you away from the group," warns Stephen sternly. He has read about the time-out strategy in an introductory psychology text. When he was young, his own teachers used this technique to deal with misbehavior. When the child interrupts again, Stephen takes quick action: "I'm sorry, Susan. You'll need to sit on a chair at the back of the room. I warned you." With this, he tries to lead the child to the chair, but she resists vigorously.

"No!" she screams. "I won't!" Other children begin to laugh, and the student teacher senses that he is losing control. Recognizing that he is in trouble, he looks to his supervising teacher, Ms. Laiti, who has just entered the classroom. This experienced teacher comes to the rescue. "Susan, why don't you sit on my lap while we hear the rest of the story?" This seems to satisfy the child. Stephen struggles to regain his composure and continues with his activity.

Stephen, an inexperienced student teacher, has responded to a classroom dilemma in an ineffective way. Warnings and time-outs—the only strategies he can think of to try in this situation—are not useful in dealing with this particular child. Ms. Laiti, who is more experienced, handles the problem more sensitively. She bases her actions on many informal observations and formal assessments of Susan's emotional development in the classroom. She is also guided by conferences and email exchanges she has had with Susan's family as she sought to understand the challenges they face and the parenting practices they use. Ms. Laiti has learned what events or stimuli set Susan off, the times of day when she needs extra support, and how to use warmth to calm her. By testing out varying strategies with Susan and observing their effects, Ms. Laiti has discovered strategies that work well in helping Susan manage her strong feelings.

Besides being less knowledgeable about Susan and her development, Stephen responds to her behavior as he does because he relies on thinking and practices of his own teachers and parents. Some of the strategies he tries—giving a warning and then issuing a time-out—were prominent practices two decades ago when he was growing up. But now there are many new evidence-based tools available to teachers.

Ms. Laiti is aware of new research on how to guide children with the kinds of emotional challenges that Susan exhibits (Alamos & Williford, 2020; Loomis, 2018; Post et al., 2020). She works hard to stay up to date and learn evidence-based practices by reading, taking courses, and attending conferences. Many important new ideas are published in scholarly journals and presented in "researchese" that she has learned to decipher. In summary, Ms. Laiti is effective in working with Susan, because she has skills in observation, assessment, and research.

This chapter has several purposes. The first is to familiarize readers with research methods so that scientific journals will not appear so intimidating. The intent is not to turn readers into researchers, but to assist them in reading and interpreting studies that have practical classroom implications. The hope is to inspire the use of what is now called ***evidence-based practice*** (Bierman et al., 2017)—the use of teaching and caregiving strategies that research studies have found to be effective in promoting development. The focus will be on critical analysis of research because all studies on human subjects are necessarily flawed. In particular, this chapter will raise a concern about whether current and past research have adequately reflected the cultural diversity within our society.

A second purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how some research methods can be used right in the classroom to assess children and guide teaching. An emphasis will be placed on how assessment data can be used to plan and teach in early childhood classrooms.

Research on Young Children

Learning Outcome 2.1 Describe the major types of child development research and give examples of both experimental and correlational studies.

Much of the information in this text has been drawn from research on young children's development. Because research on humans is never perfect, findings merely provide good guesses about the relationships between children's behavior, learning, or other characteristics and their experience and genetic makeup. As a result, professionals working with young children should be guided by research findings but not enslaved by them. They must be able to weigh the results of a particular work and judge its relevance to classroom practice based on the methods used or the sample selected.

Early Child Study

For centuries, scientists and philosophers have been interested in children's development. The aim of early work in child study was to describe normal development and determine its causes. What was considered normal, however, was often what society at the time defined as acceptable thought or behavior. John Locke (1632–1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), who were among the first Western writers to recognize the importance of environment in children's development, wrote about the origins of "goodness" and "sinfulness" in childhood. Goodness, from their perspective,

was adherence to the teachings of the church and the mores of industrialized society. Any deviation from the mainstream thought or behavior of this historical period likely would have been viewed as aberrant.

Pioneers in the field of child study conducted descriptive observations of children in an effort to plot the course of normal development. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827) and Charles Darwin (1809–1882) published biographies of their own children in an attempt to capture milestones of human growth. Obviously, the study samples of these scientists were limited. What they were, in fact, observing were the behaviors of children from privileged European families at that time. Diary studies often reflected the biases of a particular era. Diarists often emphasized or exaggerated information that supported current norms, systematically omitting information that might be deemed "shameful" by the community (Pollock, 1987).

G. Stanley Hall (1844–1924), an eminent psychologist at the turn of the 20th century, was the first to test child development theories using larger and more representative samples of children. Hall invented a now common research tool, the questionnaire, to gather data. Later researchers extended Hall's scientific methodology in the study of children, selecting even larger samples and using more formal, controlled, and objective observation techniques (Gesell & Ilg, 1949; Shirley, 1933). The results of these studies were often reported in **normative charts**, which presented milestones in physical, mental, or social development for each age level of childhood. A sample normative chart for motor development is presented in Table 2.1.

A problem with these studies was that they usually included only White, middle-class children. For example, Shirley's (1933) study of motor milestones in infancy—sometimes cited in child development textbooks today—was conducted with babies of White families in Minnesota. Would these same findings have been obtained if the study had included children from other cultural groups within the United States or in the world as a whole?

Recent research on young children has become exceedingly sophisticated. Much of the information shared in this text has been derived from these more modern studies. Several types of research designs are commonly employed to investigate specific aspects of young children's development, including correlational, experimental, qualitative, and ethnographic studies. Each will be discussed in the following sections.

Table 2.1 Example of a Normative Chart for Motor Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood

Age	Motor Development Milestone
1 month	Raises chin up off the ground
2 months	Raises chest up off the ground
4 months	Sits with adult support
7 months	Sits alone
9 months	Stands holding onto adults or furniture
10 months	Creeps
14 months	Stands alone
15 months	Walks alone

Source: Gesell & Ilg, 1949; Shirley, 1933.

Correlational Studies

In a **correlational study**, two or more behaviors or developmental characteristics are observed for a particular group of children, and an effort is made to determine whether relationships exist among them. Is the babbling of infants related to the amount of time parents spend talking with them? Is achievement in first-grade reading related to self-esteem? These kinds of questions are asked and answered in correlational studies. In each case, groups of children are observed, tested, or otherwise assessed, first on one factor and then on another. The scientist then determines whether relationships exist between the two factors.

I conducted a correlational study in which I examined relationships between preschool children's block building and their math learning (Trawick-Smith et al., 2017). First, we observed several aspects of children's block play, including the complexity of their building and the level of their collaboration with peers. Later, we assessed children's growth during the year, using a math assessment that was administered at the beginning and end of the study. We found that children who regularly built more elaborate structures and more frequently collaborated with their peers in their building showed greater math learning than other children. In other words, we found that block-building behaviors and math learning were related.

Some correlational studies are **cross-sectional**, in which factors of interest are examined by observing a group of children of many different ages only once or a small number of times. An example is a study by Alt et al. (2016) on the relationship between the socioeconomic status (SES) and English competence of young dual language learners (DLLs). Instead of following a single set of children from kindergarten to second grade—a time-consuming and costly approach—the researchers studied children of varying ages (from 5 to 8 years) during one time period. They discovered a relationship between SES and English proficiency, with children in poverty showing the lowest scores in English learning. However, this association varied by age. The strongest relationship between poverty and English ability was found for 5-year-old children. For older, primary age children this SES–language learning link was less strong. Researchers concluded that poverty has its most harmful impact on language learning in the early years.

In a **longitudinal study**, a group of children were followed for nine years to examine the impact of maternal depression and poor mother–child relationships in the early years on levels of stress in adolescence (Kujawa et al., 2020). Three-year-old children were identified whose mothers had been diagnosed with depression and were determined to have troubled relationships with their children. In adolescence a significant number of these children were found to experience clinically high levels of stress. The researchers conclude that maternal depression and its related associations with poor parenting during the preschool years can have a lasting effect on children's emotional health.

A caution must be issued about correlational studies: Just because two characteristics or behaviors are found to be related does not mean that one causes the other. If the amount of parent language is related to infant babbling, can we assume that the former caused the latter? Or could infants' babbling have, instead, caused parents to speak to them more often? It seems plausible that highly vocal babies will elicit increased response from adults. Teachers must be careful in interpreting and applying correlational research. Although scientists often conclude that one factor causes another, many alternative explanations are possible.

Experimental Studies

In an **experimental study**, the researcher intervenes in some way in children's lives and observes what happens. Will teaching parents to respond to babies when they cry lead to healthy emotional development? Will reading books to preschoolers promote their language and literacy? These are the sorts of questions an experimental study attempts to answer. In each case, the researcher causes something to occur in the lives of children and then measures the outcome. Often the goal of such investigations is to determine whether an intervention causes a positive change in children's learning or behavior.

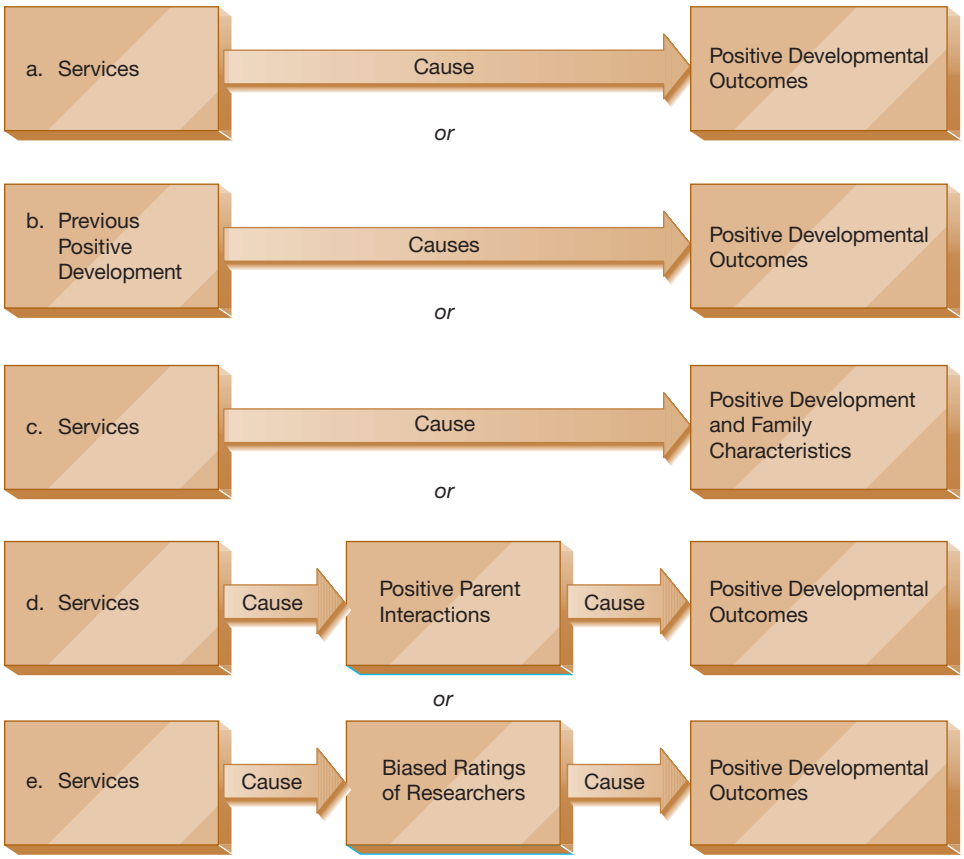
Experimental studies can be quite short in duration. Several researchers, for example, designed a six-week experiment to test strategies for improving young children's attitudes toward people of different cultures (Rutland et al., 2017). They assigned children from ages 5 to 10 years to one of four groups. One group was read stories about Euro-American children and those of historically underrepresented backgrounds interacting together in positive ways. After each story, children were guided in talking about the traits of individual characters, without any mention of culture. A second group was read the same stories but then was asked to discuss the cultures of the characters and to name the ways those of each cultural group were alike. In a third group, the same stories were read and children were asked to identify commonalities of the characters but also to discuss their cultural differences. A control group of children who did not receive any special treatment was also studied. Researchers found that all the children who had heard and discussed the stories held more positive views toward people of different cultures than the control group. Among the experimental groups, those who had discussed *both* similarities and cultural differences of the characters in the story held the most positive attitudes. The authors concluded that a strategy of both celebrating differences and noting similarities across cultures may be the most powerful method for reducing children's prejudices.

Experimental studies can also be longitudinal. In a study of impoverished children in Pakistan, beginning when they were in infancy, researchers implemented and studied the effects of four different interventions: (1) One group of families and their children were provided with nutritious food supplements alone, (2) a second group were offered training and direct intervention to provide children with "responsive cognitive stimulation," (3) a third group received both the nutrition and cognitive stimulation interventions, and (4) a control group continued receiving health and nutrition education, as well as the health services that all other groups received (Yousafzai et al., 2016). At age four children who had received cognitive stimulation—whether alone or coupled with nutritional supplements—showed the greatest gains in cognitive, social, and physical development. The authors conclude that providing cognitive stimulation may have a more powerful and long-term impact than nutritional intervention on the development of children in poverty.

The results of experimental studies often lead researchers to conclude that one factor has caused another to occur. If the children who were provided with nutritional and educational services were better off than those who did not receive these services, it is likely that the intervention caused positive outcomes. This interpretation of findings is illustrated in view (a) of Figure 2.1.

Caution must still be used in interpreting the results of experiments, however. Other interpretations are possible, as depicted in views (b), (c), (d), and (e). Child and family characteristics, positive parent interactions, or even biased research may explain positive outcomes rather than the services themselves.

Figure 2.1 There are many ways to interpret the findings of an experimental study. Several alternative explanations are possible for the outcomes of a nutritional services study. For example: (a) The services themselves caused positive development. (b) The children selected for the study were more advanced in their development before the study even began. (c) Families who volunteered their children for the study were more concerned and caring. These positive family characteristics enhanced development. (d) The nutritional services caused parents to change in some way—to become more positive or nurturing with their children, for example. These changes resulted in positive outcomes. (e) Researchers who were studying the effects of nutritional services subconsciously rated children higher in development if they received these services.



Multicultural Critique of Traditional Research

Multicultural scholars have raised concerns about traditional research methods, particularly in the study of children of diverse cultural backgrounds (Causadias et al., 2018; Decuir-Gunby et al., 2018). They argue that some researchers have systematically excluded subjects from traditionally underrepresented groups. Further, when children of color are included in studies, they are regularly compared with their White, middle-class peers on measures or behaviors that reflect the dominant culture's values. Children who speak Spanish as their primary language, for example, have been compared with their Euro-American peers on measures of standard English competence. In such comparisons, children of traditionally underrepresented groups are often portrayed as less competent.

Professionals must take care not to assume that conclusions and recommendations of researchers always apply to all individuals or ethnic groups. Some scholars have advocated qualitative and ethnographic studies that are more sensitive to and appreciative of cultural differences. Such studies focus more on describing children's development within cultural groups or families, rather than comparing them.

Qualitative/Ethnographic Studies

Correlational or experimental studies make extensive use of **quantitative methods** in which children are observed or tested and their behaviors or performance are tallied or rated numerically. These numbers are then entered into sophisticated computer programs, and in-depth statistical analyses are performed. An alternative methodology gaining support among researchers in the field is **qualitative research**. This method involves observations of children, often in natural settings. The purpose is to provide "thick descriptions" of children's development that capture all aspects of their lives: classroom environment, friendships, parents and family life, community, and culture (Bloome & Beauchemin, 2018).

The results of qualitative studies are usually presented as rich and detailed narratives that illustrate children's development. A qualitative study of how preschool children learn to read, for example, could include in-depth descriptions of how individual subjects used books over a long period of time. The researcher reviews and interprets these descriptions. Qualitative researchers do not often draw sweeping, universal conclusions about all children in the country (or the world) from their findings. Instead, their purpose is to describe individual behavior or development within a particular environmental context. This methodology, then, moves away from an effort to identify what is normal for all children.

In one qualitative study, colleagues observed 28 preschool children building with blocks together in their natural classroom setting (Trawick-Smith et al., 2020). The purpose was to ascertain which block play behaviors could be considered most developmentally beneficial and might be supported by teachers in the classroom. In the study, detailed descriptions of children's play were written. The following is one excerpt:

> Four-year-old Jaleel shows great concentration as he constructs an enclosure with hardwood blocks in his preschool classroom. He creates a perfect square shape, carefully placing blocks together at the four corners.
>
> "Jaleel, you need to make a cage for this guy so he won't eat anyone." says 4-year-old Tonia, entering the block area and holding up a small plastic dinosaur. "He's like so, so ferocious, and we need to keep him in his cage." She places the figure into the center of Jaleel's enclosure.
>
> "Okay, but he can get out," Jaleel says. "See? Right here." He makes a small space between blocks at one corner of his structure with his finger. "He can get out here or he can jump. Watch." He demonstrates how the dinosaur might leap over a wall. "And then he'll escape and eat up these guys." He gestures toward some plastic people lying on the floor. He begins to make growling noises, and says, as if he is the dinosaur, "I'm the monster of the dark and want little children to eat up."
>
> "But let's say he can't escape if we build a roof," Tonia says. She gathers some longer blocks and begins to place them over the enclosure. "See? Then he can't jump out."

"No, let's say he just crashes out," Jaleel suggests.

"Okay," Tonia says. "But he just eats one person, alright? This guy." She holds up one of the plastic people. "But then we put him in the cage and put a roof over."

There are a few grizzly moments when the dinosaur attacks, with Jaleel working the monster and roaring and Tonia playing a tiny plastic victim and crying for help. After the monster appears to have eaten his fill, Tonia says, "He has to go in the cage but he needs a bed to sleep."

"Alright," Jaleel says and fashions a long bed from blocks inside the enclosure. The two children add several other structures, including an upright block for a television. Then they collaborate in putting the rest of the roof over the structure, with Tonia selecting the blocks from a bin and handing them to Jaleel to put in place. "We need one of the long blocks," Jaleel requests. "Like about this long." Tonia chooses and hands Jaleel a block of just the right length."

Although such descriptive data did not allow us to generalize to all children in terms of block play behaviors and their benefits, this profile of children at play shows many important elements and benefits of this play activity that can inform other researchers or teachers.

Another type of qualitative research is **ethnography**. This method uses the traditional procedures of the anthropologist to study children's development within a cultural context. Researchers who follow this methodology spend a great deal of time as participants in the culture of the subjects being studied. (Ethnographic researchers may even live in the same community as subjects.) In so doing, they come to more fully understand and appreciate the culture within which children grow and develop.

Some studies have been done within the culture of the preschool or child care classroom. Here the researcher spends a long period of time with students, teachers, parents, and administrators, coming to know the environment as a participant observer. The researcher takes field notes of experiences and observations and gathers other kinds of information about subjects.

For example, two researchers spent an extended period of time in several inclusive classrooms—those that integrate young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) into a regular primary grade setting (Yi & Siu, 2020). As they visited, they observed, and interacted with children and captured their experiences in field notes. They interviewed individual children with and without ASD. They also met with adults—parents and teachers—and examined various documents and assessment data. From the information gathered from these many sources, they wrote a rich overview, which included descriptions of classroom interactions and the attitudes of children and adults. A conclusion of these authors was that more needs to be done to help typically developing children to understand, appreciate, and more fully engage with peers who have ASD.

Ethnographic investigations often capture the complexity of culture and context. Good ethnographers fully understand and appreciate the diverse histories, life experiences, worldviews, competencies, and socialization practices of cultural groups, and they describe these in their reports. Ethnographic research probably provides the fullest picture of child development from a multicultural perspective.

Classroom Assessment of Young Children

Learning Outcome 2.2 Identify the differences between summative, formative, quantitative, and qualitative types of assessment of young children.

Teachers and other professionals often use some of these same research techniques to study the development and learning of children they are working with. Although they might not think of themselves as researchers, teachers frequently observe, collect data, and survey or interview children and families in an effort to solve classroom problems or to support children's development.

The Assessment and Accountability Movement

Assessment has become a part of life for teachers, family service providers, and even parents. An emphasis on assessment in schools arose over the last few decades because a growing number of legislators, educators, parents, and community leaders began asking if the money spent on schools and child development centers was leading to higher academic achievement. Educational and social services for children are expensive, these critics noted. Are we getting our money's worth? Concerns were also raised about whether some children—those living in poverty and those with learning difficulties, in particular—were learning as much in school as their White, middle-class, typically developing peers. A push began across the United States to increase and improve measures of educational success, even at the youngest age levels. A well-known result of this movement was the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act by Congress in 2002. The bill mandated that states set clear learning standards at all age levels and regularly assess progress in meeting them. The law became politically unpopular and, in 2015, was replaced by a different education law: the Every Student Succeeds Act—ESSA (McGuinn, 2016). During the Trump administration, there were few national initiatives related to the education of young children, but the tenets of ESSA, related to standards and accountability, were relegated to individual states. In most states, an emphasis on assessment of student learning remains (Weiss, & McGuinn, 2017).

This **assessment and accountability movement** has been, to many, a mixed blessing. Preparation for and administration of assessments and the interpretation of results have been challenging responsibilities for already busy early childhood educators. However, many believe that greater assessment has resulted in teachers getting to know their students better. Through systematic observation and assessment, they have been able to identify particular strengths and challenges of many children whose needs may have otherwise gone unnoticed. In particular, teachers have been better able to identify children with disabilities. The assessment and accountability movement has also led teachers to more carefully study the impact of their classroom practices on children. For example, a preschool teacher might discover that a new strategy he is trying out to support positive social interactions leads to greater language learning, based on classroom assessments. He would continue to implement and even expand this method in his classroom. A primary-grade teacher might learn that a 15-minute outdoor play break during reading instruction increases scores on developmental reading assessments. She would continue to provide and even increase the frequency of these outdoor play breaks. On the other hand, a Head Start provider might learn that a new math program has little effect, based on assessments of children's thinking

and learning. He might modify the teaching approaches within this program or seek another model altogether.

The use of assessments to make classroom decisions has given rise to a powerful new model for supporting the development of children with and without disabilities—**response to intervention (RTI)**. In this approach, professionals assess the needs of all children—not just those with disabilities—and determine the level of support they need both at school and at home (Pullen & Kennedy, 2018; Siegel, 2020). Teachers and other professionals then design teaching strategies or more intensive interventions based on their findings. One child might need only high-quality care and education, as do all children in a classroom or center. Another might need more focused or individualized intervention due to disabilities. See the Response to Intervention special feature in this chapter.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Using Assessment to Support Learning and Development

Response to intervention, or RTI, is a teaching method designed to assess, identify, and address the individual needs of children in a classroom. Its most important components are related to the two topics examined in this chapter: research and assessment. Here's how RTI works: Early in a school year, a teacher begins to assess children, often using some of the formative assessment methods described in this chapter. For example, children might be given a one-on-one rhyming task right in the classroom during self-directed playtime in their kindergarten program. Or, at points throughout the day, the teacher might show individual Head Start children a series of pictures to name in order to get a quick evaluation of their vocabulary development. These assessments will be used to identify three different *tiers* of students. Children in Tier 1 are those who appear to be developing typically. Approximately 80% of children in a classroom will be placed in this tier, following this approach. These children require only a high-quality classroom learning environment that all teachers strive for.

A smaller percentage of children in a class—about 15%—will be identified as being in Tier 2. They will need additional support from the teacher in order to succeed in school. They may need extra guidance in reading or solving math problems. They may also need support in social interactions or in following classroom rules. Children who are identified as being in Tier 3—about 5% of a classroom group—will need more intensive intervention. This may include one-on-one services outside the classroom. The model is intended to identify a continuum of support needed by each child. More assistance may be needed first, then less special intervention, then simply typical classroom learning and teaching. So, tiers are not rigid categories into which children are placed for the rest of the school year (or their school careers!). This model is more flexible, with children moving along the continuum, based on their needs at particular points in the school year.

In order for this continuum of support to work in RTI, teachers must continually assess children and monitor their progress—particularly those who are in Tier 3. Obviously, formative assessment—discussed in this chapter—is at the heart of this method. It is not enough to identify a child who has severe speech and language difficulties and provide special interventions. The teacher must continually check to see if the child's language is advancing after a period of time (and even to see if the child still needs the more intensive interventions of Tiers 2 or 3). RTI also prescribes that teachers use interventions that are shown by research to be effective. This requires that teachers stay up to date on new techniques that are being tested and to abandon some of their old methods that have been found in current studies to make little difference.

It is important to know that several questions have been raised about RTI, particularly for young children (Council for Exceptional Children, 2011). How well does this model work in programs that serve infants, toddlers, or young preschool children? Obviously, such young children would not be evaluated on their higher-level reading or math abilities. What other assessments are most important to use with these young age groups? One concern about RTI is that it focuses most on academic areas. Although these are important, shouldn't social and emotional areas also be assessed and addressed? For example, some children, who are quite competent intellectually, might be classified in Tier 3 because of social difficulties. Such problems require just as much assessment, progress monitoring, and intervention as do learning difficulties.

Some teachers and other professionals have noted less positive effects of the assessment and accountability movement. Even toddler and preschool professionals have been under increased pressure to teach academic skills that might lead to higher test scores later in school (Valentino & Stipek, 2016). Activities in some early childhood programs have become more and more aligned with the content of later achievement tests and less on what children need currently to develop in positive ways. One concern is that the emphasis on assessment has led to a change in the early childhood curriculum. Developmentally important experiences, such as art, music, and play, are being reduced or eliminated to make room for quieter, academic learning that is more likely to be assessed in school (Schlesinger et al., 2020).

It is my belief that assessment can be extremely useful in supporting young children's development. However, assessments must be used properly and for the right purposes. A single score on a classroom-wide literacy assessment should not be used to make sweeping decisions about an individual child's overall educational program. A one-on-one assessment of language in an artificial setting may not give a full picture of an individual child's developmental needs, particularly if the child is of a different culture or speaks a different language than the assessor. In the following sections, we will examine a variety of types of, and purposes for, assessment. We will discuss how these can contribute to the positive development of young children. In order to compare and contrast assessment approaches and their benefits, we will consider the example of 4-year-old Eliana and her Head Start classroom.

> Eliana is a 4-year-old who has just been enrolled in a state-funded preschool program. She lives with her mother, grandparents, and two older sisters in a low-income housing project. The adults in her home primarily speak Spanish; her siblings speak both Spanish and English. Her first few weeks in school have been difficult for her. She has cried often, particularly during transition times. She has had trouble connecting with peers. Several children in the class have shown interest in playing with her, but she moves away from them, often avoiding eye contact. She has great difficulty paying attention at group time. She stares off, rocks, and sometimes simply gets up and walks away when the teacher is talking or reading a story. She often appears to be "in her own little world," as her teacher, Ms. McCreety, describes her. She wanders, mutters to herself, and twirls her hair repetitively. At other times, she seems very focused on just one thing. She is observed studying a single shell at the science center, for example, for a long time. Ms. McCreety quickly decides that she will need to assess Eliana's development in more depth.

For each type of assessment that we describe, we will ask: How will this assessment support Eliana's development?

Summative Assessment

One purpose of assessing learning and development is to determine how children "turn out" at the end of a school year or the completion of an intervention. This is called **summative assessment**—an overall evaluation of children's growth after they have graduated from a particular program or classroom. This type of assessment is used by school districts or funding organizations to determine if classrooms are adequately meeting educational goals. A school system-wide academic mastery test may be administered to all third graders to see whether students are making good progress in learning to read and do math. A readiness test might be administered to preschool children to determine if they have been adequately prepared for kindergarten.

Many summative assessments of early childhood development and learning are quantitative. Like quantitative research, described previously, these methods involve measuring children's performance in a highly controlled setting and obtaining scores or numbers that can be studied. On a test of reading proficiency, for example, children may sit in a quiet test setting and answer questions in a test booklet. Scores that are obtained can be averaged to show progress in reading across classrooms, schools, and an entire school district. Several examples of quantitative assessments are presented in Table 2.2.

ASSESSING ELIANA. How might summative assessments support Eliana's development? Let's say that all publically funded preschools in Eliana's state are required to administer the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) at the end of each school year, presented in Table 2.2. This is an assessment of children's **receptive vocabulary**—their ability to understand common words spoken to them. Here's how it is

Table 2.2 Common Assessments Used with Young Children

Assessment	Type	What It Measures	How It Is Administered	Common Use
Childhood Autism Rating Scale	Quantitative	Autism	Direct observations of a child in a home or classroom are gathered.	Screening to determine if a child has autism
Battelle Developmental Inventory	Quantitative	Cognitive, social, language, and motor development	It is administered as a test or scored based on observations and interviews, depending on the child.	Screening for general developmental delays
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	Quantitative	Understanding of oral vocabulary (receptive language)	Children are individually shown pictures and asked to name or describe them.	To determine children's progress in language development
Scale for Assessing Emotional Disturbance	Quantitative	Emotional and social development	Interviews are held with parents or other family members.	Screening for emotional or social difficulties
Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Ability	Quantitative	General intellectual ability and achievement	Children are individually administered test questions.	To determine overall cognitive and academic ability and identify delays across areas of learning
Developmental checklists	Quantitative	Mastery of key developmental milestones or benchmarks	Teachers observe and make check marks to indicate abilities that have been mastered by a particular child.	To evaluate each child's progress in specific developmental areas
Event or time sampling systems	Quantitative	Frequencies of behaviors of interest or concern	Teachers select a specific behavior and watch for it in the classroom, making a mark each time it is performed by a particular child.	To study a child's performance of a behavior that is of concern (e.g., aggression) or that is desired (e.g., sharing)
Anecdotal records	Qualitative	Any behavior or ability that a teacher is interested in	Teachers write detailed, objective notes on everything a particular child says or does during a classroom observation.	To assess overall learning and development; to capture what occurs before, during, and after an event of interest for a particular child
Work samples	Qualitative	Cognitive and social abilities and learning	Teachers collect examples of children's work—drawings, writing, video, and photos—and analyze them.	To determine progress in mastery of skills or learning standards
Case studies	Qualitative	Overall development within a cultural and family context	Teams of professionals assemble data from many different sources, including family interviews, and write a rich description of the child.	To assist in identifying individual needs and planning interventions for children with disabilities

administered: An adult sits with an individual child and shows a card with pictures on it of various objects or people performing specific tasks. The adult asks, "Which picture shows a person *sleeping*?" Points are scored for correctly pointing to the matching picture. Eliana's scores on this assessment are very low—clearly she is having difficulty in the area of language.

The state officials where Eliana lives examine the PPVT scores for all children enrolled in publicly funded preschool. They compare the performance of those who are enrolled in different types of programs (e.g., full day, part day, public school-based). The state also uses PPVT scores to compare the effects of the different curriculum models being implemented. This information may lead to improvements or greater funding for Eliana's preschool. If the state learns that children in Eliana's publicly funded preschool lag far behind children in other programs in language development, for example, the state may take steps to reform programs or invest in professional development for teachers. If the state determines that one particular curriculum works best in promoting language, Eliana's preschool and others in the state may adopt this new, more potent model.

However, unless Eliana continues in her program for another year, these changes may not address her individual problems. A limitation of summative assessment is that it is often conducted at the end of a child's program, so it does not provide information to help a child during the current school year. Of course, if Ms. McCreety shares Eliana's PPVT scores with her kindergarten teacher for the next school year, this assessment may eventually be of some practical use in helping Eliana in the classroom. But Ms. McCreety, who is deeply concerned about Eliana's development, will obtain very little information that she can use currently.

Other concerns about such summative assessments relate to Eliana's culture. Is the PPVT administered to Eliana in English or Spanish? Certainly, a more accurate picture of Eliana's language would be obtained if the Spanish version of this assessment were also administered. At the very least, a test administrator who is of Eliana's own culture and speaks her own language would make her more comfortable in a test setting (Patterson et al., 2020). Yet how convenient would it be to arrange for these things in such a large-scale, end-of-year assessment?

Another concern is the impact of summative assessments on teachers and teaching (Saeki et al., 2018). Knowing that the state will scrutinize the PPVT scores of her students, will Ms. McCreety feel pressure to teach vocabulary words in intensive and inappropriate ways? Will she narrow the scope of her curriculum to focus on language and literacy at the expense of math, science, or social studies? Most important for Eliana, will Ms. McCreety feel pressure to reduce play and social interaction, which may be so important to address Eliana's needs?

Formative Assessment

These concerns have led many educators to reconsider the purposes of assessment and to adopt more practical and ongoing methods of studying children's development. **Formative assessment** is the evaluation of children's behavior, learning, and development over time, and relatively frequently, in order to immediately improve services to individual children. Formative assessments are often administered in authentic classroom or home settings. For example, an observation of children's social skills may be conducted on the playground during recess at an elementary school. A video captures a child playing a mathematics game during freeplay in a preschool classroom and can

be analyzed. Teachers will use information from these formative assessments to immediately plan strategies to help individual children or to modify their overall teaching techniques. So, data from such assessments are often viewed as more useful to classroom teachers (Aras, 2019).

QUANTITATIVE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT. Formative assessments sometimes involve observation checklists or instruments that produce quantitative data. Like quantitative research methods, such assessments provide numbers for professionals to analyze. An example is the **developmental checklist**—a listing of milestones or behavioral characteristics that may be checked off by a teacher. Children are observed and rated in authentic classroom settings on each item on the checklist according to a predetermined coding system. Sample items from a checklist that assesses preschoolers' social development are presented in Table 2.3.

Teachers using this checklist would determine whether children could perform each of these social tasks independently, with adult assistance, or with direct adult guidance. Results would indicate which students needed support in social interactions and the areas in which they required assistance. Data from a developmental checklist can also provide parents with an overview of development.

Other quantitative research methods are adapted for use in the classroom as formative assessments. For example, a child care provider may want to determine how frequently a particular child engages in literacy activities during the day, or a kindergarten teacher may wish to record the number of contacts students make with peers. In these instances, a coding system (similar to those used by researchers) can be developed to tally how often these behaviors are performed.

Several types of coding systems are used in formative assessment (Collier-Meek et al., 2020). In **event sampling**, teachers make a check or notation on a coding sheet every time a particular behavior is observed. For example, a teacher who is interested in how frequently children exhibit aggressive behavior will carefully watch for aggressive interchanges and make a tally or check mark whenever these occur. Over time, data may be collected concerning which children are most aggressive or how prevalent aggression is within the whole classroom.

In **time sampling**, teachers observe children at regular time intervals and record interactions that occur within that time frame (Zakszeski al., 2017). For

Table 2.3 Checklist Assessing Social Development of Preschoolers

Social Skill	Teacher Rating
Interacts with peers	I
Uses language with peers to express needs or ideas	I
Plays cooperatively with peers	AA
Shares toys and materials	AA
Enters peer groups effectively	DG
Elicits and maintains the attention of peers	AA
Resolves conflicts with peers	DG

Coding System:

I = Can perform the skill independently

AA = Can perform the skill with some adult assistance

DG = Needs direct guidance from adults in performing the skill

example, a teacher might make a brief observation of a child's interactions every 10 minutes during a free-play period in the classroom and note whether the child is playing alone or with other children. Throughout the morning, the teacher would continue gathering data on the child's social contact at 10-minute intervals, placing a check mark under "playing alone" or "playing with peers" on a coding sheet. Over time, they would get a picture of how frequently children interacted with others. More elaborate time-sampling systems can be developed. Table 2.4 presents a coding sheet that allows the teacher to code, at once, the level of social involvement and the type of play a child is exhibiting. At some regular interval—say, every 5 minutes—a teacher using this system would make a check mark corresponding to the type of play (e.g., construction play) and the level of social participation (e.g., cooperative play) the child exhibited.

Teachers can design their own observation systems to study behaviors of interest or concern. Great care must be taken, however, to clearly and objectively define behaviors to be studied. In a coding system for aggression, for example, should name-calling be considered an aggressive act? Should a check mark be made when a child physically resists a peer's attempt to snatch a toy? These issues must be resolved before observation begins. In designing observation systems, teachers must also be cautious not to select behaviors that are valued only by the dominant culture. For example, a social interaction rating scheme would be considered culturally biased if it included the item "establishes eye contact with peers and adults." Although looking directly at a speaker is a part of typical communication within White American society, eye contact is viewed as a sign of disrespect in other cultures (de Barona & Barona, 2017).

ASSESSING ELIANA. How can Ms. McCreety use formative, quantitative assessment to support Eliana? Let's say that she conducts a social participation and play assessment using the coding sheet presented in Table 2.4. Early in the school year she discovers that over 80% of the check marks for Eliana on this assessment fall under "solitary play." She is rarely coded as even playing parallel to peers. This immediately alerts Ms. McCreety to Eliana's need for support in engaging with other children. There is one bright spot Ms. McCreety discovers in her assessment: When Eliana plays games—board games and card games that are available during free play—she receives a few marks under associative and even cooperative play. For some reason, Eliana appears to interact more with peers in a game-playing situation. Because this is a formative assessment, conducted throughout the school year, Ms. McCreety can use this information to immediately support Eliana. She might invite Eliana to periodically

Table 2.4 Sample Coding Sheet for Observing Social Participation and Type of Play

Level of Social Participation	TYPE OF PLAY			
	Functional Play	Construction Play	Dramatic Play	Games
Solitary play	///	/////		
Parallel play		//	//	
Associative play		////	/	
Cooperative play		////		///

"/" indicates an observation of that play category during a 5-minute period.

Source: Parten, 1932; Piaget, 1962; Rubin et al.,1976.