Foundations of Early Childhood Education

Teaching Children in a Diverse Society

SEVENTH EDITION

JANET GONZALEZ-MENA

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Janet Gonzalez-Mena

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To the memory of my dear friend Patricia Monighan Nourot (1947 to 2006)—
mother, wife, and educator—
who dedicated her life to teaching children and teaching others about *children.*

Brief Contents

Contents

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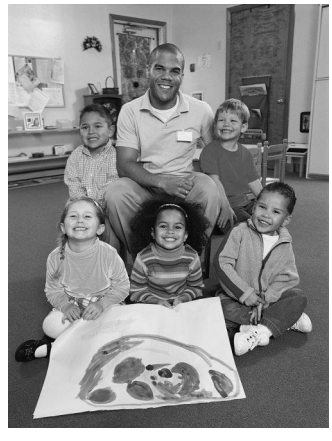

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Part 2

Foundations in Supporting Development and Learning 208

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Preface

Society is waking up to the fact that the early years last forever as the saying goes. Whereas families once were the only ones responsible for their children and their early education until they went to school, now the responsibility is more shared. That puts a good deal of pressure on us in early care, and education to do the best we can to make sure each program is of high quality.

In *quality* early care and education programs, children not only gain the foundations they need for school success and beyond, but they also learn to interact in cooperative ways with others, the basis for gaining a sense of community. Rugged individualism was badly needed in the frontier days of the United States, but today we face huge challenges in creating unity through diversity and keeping the economy healthy. A good beginning in a *high quality* early care and education program can lead to both social and economic benefits and is a great investment for the society to make. It is the kind of investment that will grow from generation to generation. Individuals reap the benefits of this investment and so does society.

This textbook is designed to help increase the quality in early care and education programs through training teachers. It features skill building with a solid theoretical base. Many students taking early childhood classes are already working with young children—in practicum placements, as volunteers or staff in centers or as family child care providers. This book addresses their needs as well as those of beginning students who have no hands-on experience.

An advantage of using this book is that it provides students with an overview of what goes on in early childhood programs through the use of examples, anecdotes, and scenarios. Some students may have opportunities to see master teachers at work, but others will not. To address this reality, the text finds ways to transport readers to early childhood classrooms and family child care homes so they can "watch" how effective educators facilitate the teaching-learning process. These examples are designed to help readers put themselves in the educator's shoes, examine their own reactions, and anticipate how they might handle similar experiences.

What is New to this Edition?

1. *Reexamining Professionalism.* What does it mean to be a professional Early Childhood Educator? Is ECE a true profession? There is no clearcut answer to that question. Students will be engaged in being part of this current discussion as they prepare for a career in ECE. In this edition, Stephanie Feeney and Nancy Freeman examine the various sides of this issue.

2. *Using Reflective Practice* integrated throughout to help students fine tune observation skills and think about what they observe. Reflective practice helps students pay close attention and become sensitive to what children might need at any given time and what next step might further their learning. Observing, stepping back, reflecting, and figuring out what's needed is more demanding than instructing, teaching, and showing children how to do things, but the benefits are much greater.
3. *Encouraging Problem-Solving in Children.* Research by Carol Dweck, Angela Duckworth, and others provides students with a perspective on effective adult responses to help children learn and explore their interests. The science strongly suggests that the outcomes are more positive and enduring when adults praise effort and process over success because it cultivates grit and perseverance in the face of failure or struggle. It is becoming clear that children who hear "Good job!" often tend to avoid activities that bring an enthusiastic adult response.
4. *Recognizing the Impact of the Environment and Culture on Learning*. As numbers of children under three years old enter into out-of-home programs, students need knowledge of what is in an environment that serves this age group. This edition will expand on the differences between infant-toddler and preschool physical environments, illustrating how children learn through their interactions with developmentally appropriate environments. Moreover, this edition will also examine how creating an inclusive social-emotional environment can support a sense of belonging by acknowledging and accepting both cultural and developmental differences.
5. *Teaching Children How to Play.* Not all children need to be taught to play, but some do. This new material helps students know how to observe the child and comment on what he or she is doing. Speculating on what the child may do next can serve as a simple suggestion that encourages the child to go further.
6. *Respecting Infants and Toddlers as Capable Self-Learners.* Respect is not always a word used to describe attitudes toward the youngest children. How we perceive the capabilities of infants and toddlers affects how we teach. If we underestimate the potential of both infants and toddlers, we may hamper their learning by doing for them what they can learn on their own through their own natural instincts to explore and experiment. Students will discover respectful behaviors by contrasting them with the more common disrespectful ones.
7. *Putting an Emphasis on Supporting and Augmenting Learning and Development.* Curriculum is a word that comes down from training teachers for olders students and is used more and more in Early Childhood Education—even in infant-toddler programs. Misconceptions about curriculum abound. As an introductory text, this new edition changes the emphasis on *curriculum* and instead puts it where it more rightly belongs for the beginner by focusing fully on learning and development. From the many examples throughout the

book, students will become more sensitive to each child's developmental pathway, what the child is learning and what the next steps are. When students can move beyond individuals to patterns in the group, they will be more prepared to be early childhood teachers. The last three chapters of this book transition the student into the realm of curriculum, but still put a major emphasis on learning and development.

8. Updated scholarship appears in each chapter and is reflected in References and F or Further Reading.

THEMES OF THIS BOOK

Critical Thinking Skills

This text explains theory in such practical ways that students can take sophisticated information in stride and understand its usefulness right away. The book talks directly *to* the student *from* the author, person-to-person. The text makes it clear that there is no formula for "correct" behavior in every situation. Students are encouraged to use critical thinking along with reflective practice rather than look for right answers. To do this, the text sometimes provides a particular viewpoint but then asks students to use it as a backboard off of which they can bounce their own ideas. Following the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) advice in the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* book, students are urged to make decisions about what is best for each child and family based on child development principles as well as the child's and family's individual and cultural background.

Integrated Subject Matter

As you become familiar with the text, you will notice that the book is unique in many ways. Part of the uniqueness shows in the way important themes and subjects are integrated throughout. For example, diversity is not a separate chapter but a main theme throughout the book. Working with children with special needs is also integrated throughout–in chapters on guiding behavior (Chapter 5), modeling adult relationships (Chapter 7), and setting up the physical environment (Chapter 8) among others. This book is about the care and education of *all* children, including those with special needs. Observation and reflective practice are also strands that weave through the book. Guidance is another strand. Besides being set apart in a separate chapter, guidance strategies also appear wherever students might need them for helping children solve problems and resolve conflicts. Learning to resolve conflicts equitably is an important part of moral development so one could say that moral development is embedded throughout the book, though it is not pointed out as such.

The Link Between Care and Education

A quick look through the chapter headings makes evident some of the unconventional approaches the book takes. Why is there a chapter on routines–those essential

activities of daily living that involve physical care such as eating, toileting, and even diaper changing? That emphasis reflects the fact that care and education cannot be separated in the early years. Also routines are featured because this book addresses the needs of infants and toddlers as well as children ages three through eight. The younger the child, the more important (and educational) are the care-focused activities. The chapter on routines also reflects the fact that even in preschool and primary classrooms, some children with special needs may still need the kind of physical care that falls under the classification of caregiving routines.

Developmental Information: Birth Through Age Eight

Why does the information about ages and stages appear in Chapter 11 instead of Chapter 1, and where are the familiar chapter headings of physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development? Those have all been reconstructed into new forms and folded into the text in innovative ways. These changes may challenge traditionally minded people. But with an open mind and a little readjustment, the organization makes sense. Developmental information is presented differently but never minimized. One of the basic glues that holds our profession together is the general agreement about the value of developmental research. The Program Standards for the NAEYC Accreditation uses the word *development* 19 times in their 10 standards.

Modeling as Teaching

Another innovation is reflected in the two chapters on modeling as a way of teaching children. I do not mean showing children how to create a picture, make a craft, or solve a problem, but rather, more subtle unconscious modeling through interactions and everyday actions and manners that children pick up on. The point is that when adults are focused outwardly on the children, they often ignore their own behavior and the unspoken messages they are giving. Children pick up adult attitudes and accompanying behaviors. Since diversity and equity are important subjects of this book, adults must model acceptance of diversity and behaviors that lead to equity.

Family-Centered Approach

In early care and education programs, the relationship with families and those who work with their children is vital. The strand weaves throughout and is also featured in a chapter in Part I—not left until the end of the book. Although early educators play a prominent role in the lives of children, they cannot ignore that families play a much greater and more long-term role. Combined with a focus on diversity, this strand makes clear that professionals cannot ignore what families want for their children, even when they do not see eye-to-eye with all families. What is at stake are children's identity formation and connections to their family. This emphasis on parents' goals and values reflects the vision of a pluralistic, democratic society. This viewpoint is quite different from a "let's study diversity" approach to multicultural curriculum. This book teaches students to use an antibias, activist approach.

FEATURES

- **Part-Opening Introductions** provide readers with an overview of the chapters to follow, pointing out how each informs the larger message of the part.
- A **Chapter Outline** begins each chapter to lay out the key topics.
- The **In This Chapter You Will Discover** sections provide readers with a listing of what they should learn by reading the chapters.
- Marginal links **provide** key content to the **NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards.**
- *Focus on Diversity* boxes allow readers to understand differences in new ways.
- **Marginal definitions** explain key terms at the point where they appear in the text.
- *Point of View* boxes provide two sides of an argument or idea.
- *The Theory Behind the Practice* boxes link content to the theory supporting it.
- *Voices of Experience* boxes present real-life stories from real-life practitioners.
- **A Story to End With** section concludes each chapter with a brief scenario related to the chapter's topic.
- A **summary** provides a conclusion to each chapter.
- **Reflection Questions** encourage students to consider and apply the chapter's topics.
- **Terms to Know** lists key terms discussed in this chapter.
- **For Further Reading** presents a listing of suggested related readings.

SUPPLEMENTS

The seventh edition of *Foundations of Early Childhood Education: Teaching Children in a Diverse Society* is now available online with Connect, McGraw-Hill Education's integrated assignment and assessment platform. Connect also offers SmartBook© for the new edition, which is the first adaptive reading experience proven to improve grades and help students study more effectively. All of the title's website and ancillary content is also available through Connect, including:

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> ***"I really liked this app—it made it easy to study when you don't have your textbook in front of you."***
>
> - Jordan Cunningham, Eastern Washington University

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About the Author

Janet Gonzalez-Mena was on the faculty of the Child and Family Studies Program at Napa Valley College for 15 years where she taught academic classes and also worked in partnership with campus child care as a practicum teacher. Since 1991 she has also worked for WestEd Program for Infant-Toddler Care PITC as a "trainer of trainers." Janet has experience as a preschool teacher, home visitor, child care director, family child care coordinator, and supervisor of a pilot program of therapeutic child care for abused infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. She has a special interest in diversity, equity, and partnering with parents. Gaining more experience with full inclusion programs came when Janet joined the faculty of another WestEd training project called *Beginning Together*, a project designed to promote inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs. Janet occasionally works for WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies as a writer and has contributed a chapter called "Culture and Communication in the Child Care Setting" to WestEd's *Guide to Language Development and Communication* (2011). She also worked on a project called *Bridging Cultures in Early Care and Education*, which resulted in coauthoring a training guide published by WestEd and Erlbaum. Janet has written a number of other books and articles about early childhood education and parenting, including *Dragon Mom.* Janet's writing appears in *Child Care Information Exchange* and *Young Children.* For example, her article "On the Way to Friendship: Growing Peer Relationships Among Infants and Toddlers" appeared in *Exchange* in May 2012. Her coauthored article "Self-Regulation: Taking a Broader Perspective" appeared in the January 2011 issue of *Young Children*. Janet also coauthored an article for *The Signal*, which is the newsletter of the World Association for Infant Mental Health (2011). Her book *Diversity in Early Care and Education: Honoring Differences* was distributed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children as a comprehensive member benefit for 2008. A book coauthored with Anne Stonehouse called *Making Links* (2008) reflects Janet's interest in collaboration and is about planning and practice in partnership with children and parents. Reflecting that interest is her book 50 *Early Childhood Strategies for Working and Communicating with Diverse Families* (2013) now in a third edition. Although she has wide experience in early childhood education, major interests focuses on the care and education of infants and toddlers. Janet studied with Magda Gerber, the Los Angeles infant expert, and also with Anna Tardos, daughter of Emmi Pikler, founder of the Pikler Institute in Budapest, Hungary. Janet has a Master in Arts Degree in Human Development from Pacific Oaks College.

Foundations of Early Childhood Education

PART 1

Foundations of the Teaching–Learning Process

The Role of the Early Childhood Educator

Part 1 was written for two purposes: to give background and theory to students going into early childhood education and to act as a mini-crash course on how to work with children when you're in an introductory class and taking a practicum or field experience course at the same time. Because this is an introductory text and presumably the first class students take, the professors who reviewed the manuscript wanted to see background material in the first chapter. So if you're reading this sequentially, you start out with some history, theory, and an idea about early childhood education as a special kind of profession. That's fine if you have the luxury of studying the history and theories first before entering the field. Many coming into the field, however, find themselves faced with a group of children from day one. Others are already working in the field before they take their first academic class. If you're in that situation, you can't dig into which theorist said what while two children are fighting over a toy in the corner. You need to know what to do!

Chapter 2 takes a big leap from the background material and theory in Chapter 1 dives straight into practice. The next five chapters focus on the vital skills that adults need to work effectively with young children. This is not the ordinary sequence of most introductory texts because it focuses so heavily on practice. Watch though how in each chapter practice is tied into the theory behind it. Theory may not be explicitly stated except where highlighted, but rest assured that theory lies behind practice on every page.

The chapters of Part 1 focus on the adult's role in the teaching–learning process in a holistic way; in contrast, Parts 2 and 3 focus more specifically on supporting and promoting development and learning in a more traditional way. Part 1 emphasizes the adult's role in intentionally planning or thinking things out and also in spontaneously taking advantage of opportunities that emerge. The goal in both cases is to enhance *all* children's learning in the various areas of development. When *all* is stressed in such a way, it assumes that the group includes

diversity—either obvious or invisible. It also assumes that the diversity is not just in family background, but also in ability. Children with disabilities and other special needs, identified or not, belong with their typically developing peers. This book recognizes that reality and makes suggestions about how to respond individually and appropriately to each and every child.

The idea of unwritten plans as an approach to learning relates to the fact that children learn every minute of the day, whether adults are aware of it or not. When the adults don't pay attention to what the children are learning, the lessons may be detrimental. For example, if you're not paying attention, the children in the block corner are learning that those who grab get the blocks they want. By paying attention, you can help them learn to share and still get what they want to play with. Furthermore, if you are not careful, other children may learn that hitting works when other children will not give in as long as no adult notices. Sometimes children learn that loud crying is the only behavior that gets adult attention. Careful observation, reflection, and awareness can help you see that when adults notice, encourage, and intervene in ways that support positive behavior they make a difference in what children learn.

Most people know they should set good examples for children, but some are not fully aware of the power of the modeling effect. Much of what children learn—desirable or not—comes from imitating the powerful adults around them. Adults are aware of their own behaviors and consciously try to model ones they want the children to learn, which is an example of an unwritten curriculum. When you grab a child, roughly sit her down, and speak to her in a threatening voice, you model aggression. When you make eye contact with every adult you speak to except the one you dislike, you model differential behavior. If that adult happens to have darker skin than you, or speaks a foreign language, children will notice. Even if your feelings may be completely unrelated to race or culture, these differences that children notice can eventually become racist behavior on their part. Most textbooks devote little to modeling or setting examples for children, but in this book, two entire chapters, Chapters 6 and 7, are devoted to what children learn from the attitudes and behaviors—implicit and explicit—of the adults around them. This is not only unwritten curriculum, but it's practically invisible. Yet modeling is a powerful teaching tool when used with awareness.

Unwritten curriculum also includes planning. Planning and preparation are part of everything. Being responsive and spontaneous is important, but so are observing and reflecting in order to arrange the environment, supervise groups, interact with individuals, and be ready to make appropriate interventions when needed. This is why observation and also reflective practice play such an important part in the chapters of this first section. Even though the chapter on more formal records and assessment comes later, you are always observing and doing informal assessment whenever you are working with children. This is how you know when and how to interact with them.

At this point you are ready to increase your knowledge of the foundations of early childhood education.

1 Early Childhood Education as a Career

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Four Themes in Early Childhood Teacher Training

The Value of Reflective Practice

A Multicultural Perspective

A Holistic Approach

Professionalism

Child-Development History

Historical Trends and Figures

Child-Development Theorists and Their Theories

Pioneer Educators

Brain Research

What It Means to Be an Early Childhood Educator

Legal Responsibilities

Code of Ethics

A Story to End With

In This Chapter You Will Discover

- what reflective thinking has to do with knowing yourself.
- how a multicultural perspective relates to a pluralistic goal.
- what is meant by the term *whole child.*
- what it means to be an early childhood professional and the legal responsibilities involved.
- why early childhood educators need to know about "ages and stages."
- what is developmentally appropriate practice.
- which standard-setting early childhood organization is the world's largest.
- the history of early childhood education and why you can't separate care and education.
- whether there is an answer to the "nature–nurture question."

Some say, "All you can ever teach is yourself, but if this is true, why would anyone need a text like this? Indeed, early childhood education (ECE) is a career and can also be considered a special kind of profession. Those who enter it must learn to speak the language of their chosen field because it binds early childhood educators together. The goal of this book is to give you the concepts and the vocabulary shared by the ECE community and to introduce you to the reality of the early childhood culture.

FOUR THEMES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER TRAINING

This book carries four themes throughout that are important to the early childhood educator. One is **reflective practice:** we must examine our experience, both past and immediate, in order to understand it, learn from it, and grow. The second theme is **multiculturalism:** we must recognize, respect, and value the diversity that encompass the "American people." The third theme is **holism:** early childhood education focuses on the "whole child" and fashions its curriculum accordingly to facilitate the teaching–learning process. The last theme is **how we define ourselves:** we are educators, not glorified babysitters.

The Value of Reflective Practice

If the statement "All you can ever teach is yourself" is true, ask yourself honestly, "How well do I know myself, particularly in relation to children unrelated to you?" Working with other people's children is an experience that teaches you a lot about yourself. Tucked-away feelings, forgotten experiences, and buried treasures may surface as you embark on this career. This book is designed to help you deal with the negatives as well as rejoice in the positives that come from working with young children.

As you read, be mindful of who you are—your gender, your race, your ethnicity, your culture, your family circumstances, and your background. You are a real person, bringing with you the sum total of your experiences. The children, too, have their own gender, race, ethnicity, culture, and family background that influence their interactions with you. The interface between an adult and child is where the greatest learning takes place and constitutes what is often referred to as the "unwritten curriculum." The challenge is to be reflective about what you perceive during those interactions—the ones that involve you and the ones you observe that do not necessarily involve you.

As you read this book, you will learn more about yourself and about early childhood education as a career.

A Multicultural Perspective

This book takes a pluralistic view of the United States; it recognizes, respects, and values the many cultures that constitute the "American people." This book recognizes that the "predominant culture" is only a culture, not a universal reality to

FOCUS ON DIVERSITY

Aspects of Culture

Culture is much more than mere ethnicity or national origin. The term *culture* includes the way lives are influenced by race, gender, age, abilities and disabilities, language, socioeconomic class, education, religion and/or spiritual practice, geographical roots of the family, and present location as well. Sexuality, including sexual orientation, is also included. We are a sum of numerous influences and so are the children and families served by early care and education programs.

avoid the insinuation (intended or not) that the predominant culture is "normal" and that other cultures (Asian American, African American, Latin American, and so on) are deviations from the norm. As shown in the *Focus on Diversity* box, culture is a complex composite of attributes, beyond food, music, and customs, that influence every facet of our lives.

I, Janet, author of this book, am an Anglo American married to a Mexican. I live in a multicultural, multiracial family through marriage and adoption. Members of my family have been challenged with a variety of disabilities. Although I have had plenty of exposure to diversity, I still have to work at seeing the world through various perspectives. Sometimes I fail to do so.

In this text, I often speak from my own experience in the first person to make this book as authentic as possible. We all know our own truth best, and although we must try to see other perspectives, we sometimes miss the mark. Yet the more we speak from an honest place within ourselves, the more we can share our perspectives with others and invite them to share theirs with us.

A Holistic Approach

The "whole child" is an important concept behind this text. Although we may sometimes focus on a child's mind, body, or feelings, we cannot separate one part from the other. The child operates as a whole. We may plan an activity with intellectual objectives in mind, but we can never ignore how the child responds physically or emotionally.

Furthermore, we cannot work with children without considering the context of their family and home life, which are influential to a child's individual, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic makeup. We welcome not only the individual child into our early childhood classroom, but also his or her family. Also even when the family is not present, we must remember that the family, which represents a larger context, is always part of the child's individual makeup.

In order to teach the whole child, early childhood education must offer a holistic **curriculum.** Rather than offer separate subjects taught at separate times, the teaching–learning process occurs in a holistic way throughout the day. Curriculum is a broad

curriculum A plan for learning.

An integrated approach allows both the teaching and learning processes to occur in a holistic way.
Ariel Skelley/Getty Images

concept and can be thought of as a plan for learning. For instance, a bread-making project, an example of a holistic curriculum, that starts early in the day can weave in and out of the day's activities and may continue the next day. This activity can encompass a variety of concepts and skills related to math, science, culture, feelings, eye-hand coordination, sensory development, social relationships, language, symbolic representation, and emergent literacy; it also teaches self-help skills and can be incorporated into the daily food plan.

emergent curriculum
An approach to teaching that focuses on "bottom up" rather than "top down" curriculum. It emphasizes being responsive to children's interests and creating meaningful learning opportunities that organically emerge from their interests.

Projects can flow from one to another—an approach called **emergent curriculum.** For example, a simple water-play activity involving a hose and a sandbox could lead to a variety of projects, depending on the interest of the children and adults. In one program, the children were frustrated when water disappeared instead of pooling in the sandbox. They ended up with an extended project of creating a "beach." It took days to dig out the sandbox, lay down a plastic tarp, and put the sand back in. When the children filled the sandbox with water this time, the water pooled at one end where the sand level was lower, and the other end became the beach. Taking the project a step further, the teacher documented the process through photos and words and encouraged the children to draw, dictate, and write about what they did, what happened, and how they felt about it. The documentation was displayed, which gave the project a past and helped the children conceive of future remodelings and related projects. The display also gave them much to talk about and informed the parents of their children's projects, thus bridging what has been called the "home-school gap."

This is one example of how teachers can encourage a holistic approach by continuity in learning—emphasizing depth over breadth of learning. The goal of this approach is not to merely watch the children, keep them safe, and allow them to

play with whatever toys happen to be present; nor is it aimed at presenting children with a string of isolated, unconnected learning activities. Instead, curriculum is developed to provide continuity.

This book is about planning for learning, but it is not a curriculum book. It is a text that introduces the reader to the idea that learning is always a part of every child's life, and the teacher must be attuned to that fact.

Another aspect of this text's holistic approach is that it is a prosocial approach. Although there is no chapter devoted specifically to character and value education, suggestions about how to guide children toward prosocial skills, attitudes, and behavior are woven throughout the book.

Professionalism

professionalism A set of attitudes, theories, and standards that guides the early childhood professional.

Perhaps it is clear by now that early childhood education is both a career and also a special kind of profession, not just glorified babysitting. Early childhood education is a branch of education that deals with children from birth to age eight. What children in this age category need is different from what older students need.

What is a profession and what makes early childhood education a "special kind of profession"? According to Stephanie Feeney and Nancy Freeman,[1] a profession has nine attributes as requirements, which include:

1. Requirements for entry.
2. Specialized knowledge and expertise.
3. Prolonged training in using professional judgment.
4. Standards of practice.
5. Distance from clients.
6. Commitment to significant social value.
7. Recognition as the only group that can perform its societal function.
8. Autonomy.
9. A code of ethics.

Early childhood education does not have all of these attributes.

- We do not have requirements for entrance in the same way that other professions do.
- We do not have professional autonomy because the field is governed by laws and licensing agencies rather than early childhood educators.
- We do not have prolonged training, except for those who choose it, because training requirements vary by state.

What we do have is specialized knowledge and expertise that is supported by the science of child development. We also have professional organizations that set standards and a code of ethics.

Early childhood educators combine care and education in many different kinds of programs, but they share common goals. They agree that early childhood is to

be appreciated as a unique stage in the life cycle. They strive to educate the whole child, taking into consideration mind, body, and feelings. They create educational goals designed to help each child achieve his or her individual potential in the context of relationships. In addition, early childhood professionals recognize that the child cannot be separated from the social context, which includes family, culture, and society. They not only strive to understand and relate to children in context but also appreciate and support the ties that bind the child to his or her family.

Early childhood educators look to the science of child development for their knowledge base about what children need and how they learn and develop; they use research to distinguish science from myth. Those untrained in early childhood education may rely more on their own assumptions, background, experience, and bits of research. For example, many people still believe that spanking is effective in teaching a child to behave properly. The early childhood educator, however, knows that research indicates that harsh physical punishment models violence, creates hostile feelings, and doesn't improve behavior.

Without a background in child development, some adults might expect a child to act much older than he or she is, so they might say to a very young child, "Don't cry! You're acting like a baby." Or they might expect a slightly older child to sit still and behave like mature students who have the ability to learn by listening. Early childhood professionals, however, are familiar with scientific evidence that shows what appropriate behavior expectations are for each developmental stage.

ages and stages
A catch phrase that relates to childhood developmental features and behaviors that tend to correlate with specific ages. Each stage describes a particular period of development that differs qualitatively from the stages that precede and follow it. The sequence of stages never varies.

Ages and Stages. "Ages and stages" is a catch phrase that refers to particular sets of tasks and behaviors that are specific to different periods of child development. Usually, the stages correspond to particular ages, but not always. Developmental variation within an age group can be great. Some children take longer to get to and pass through each stage and others move more quickly, yet, the stages tend to occur in an unvarying sequence. Cultural differences also play a role in defining expected behaviors at any given age.

Physical milestones of development were introduced by Arnold Gesell (1880–1961) based on his research of children's behavior. Following Gesell's tradition, Benjamin Spock and T. Barry Brazelton have brought the concepts and the specifics of stage development to the attention of the general public. Many others have continued to research and standardize **ages and stages** norms, expanding on Gesell's rather narrow sample.

Stage norms are useful, but remember, children are individuals. Also, keep in mind that, research does not always have the final answer; it may not even be asking the right questions. Early childhood education addresses cultural and value differences that is sometimes overlooked by research. Nevertheless, as the cultural diversity of researchers more closely reflects the demographics of the population, we will move closer to solving these kinds of problems.

Professional Organizations. Early childhood educators have professional organizations that guide and support them, help them make professional ties, and keep them abreast of current issues through the publication of journals. Two of the

oldest respected organizations in the United States are the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Both organizations have long histories as advocates for children, their families, and education, and they continue to have substantial influence on improving the field. **ACEI** started in the late 1800s as a kindergarten organization but changed its name and expanded its focus to preschool and elementary school in the 1930s. Today, ACEI's work includes publishing a journal and books focusing on children from birth to early adolescence and hosting annual international study conferences. **NAEYC,** established in 1926 (originally named the National Association for Nursery Education), began the same year that the federal Head Start program was launched, which brought for the first time ever national public attention and funding to preschool education. The NAEYC began to rapidly grow and by its 50th anniversary in 1976, it had a membership of 31,000. As more and more women joined the workforce and dual-income households began to rise as well as single parents, concern about both the need and quality of child care led NAEYC to launch a national voluntary accreditation system for early childhood programs. As a result, during the years 1985–1990, NAEYC membership doubled from 45,000 to 90,000 members. Also, during this time, NAEYC begin issuing position statements, publishing journals, and hosting annual conferences, which until this day remains one of the largest conferences of early childhood educators.

The NAEYC is by far the largest and best-known early childhood education organization and has set standards for the field by: creating an accreditation process, which is administered through its National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, working to improve pay and working standards for teachers, and creating a code of ethics to guide early childhood educators in their work and decision making. The NAEYC advocates for young children and their families through its position papers, designed to influence government policies and early childhood education practices.[2]

Another momentous organization, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), was started by Marion Wright Edelman in 1982. The **CDF** is a lobby based in Washington, DC, and its primary purpose is to advocate for children, particularly those in poverty and those of color. In 1996, the CDF drew national attention with a demonstration called "I Stand for Children"; people came from across the continent to stand in the nation's capital to shine a spotlight on children and their needs. The "Stand for Children" campaign went local after this event. Today communities across the nation each create their own versions of "Stand for Children."

An organization called Zero to Three has established a National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families that emphasizes the care and education of the first three years of life. With welfare reform in the 1990s, growing numbers of infants and toddlers are being cared for outside their families. In addition to some compelling research on brain development, which indicates that, as the slogan goes, "the first three years last forever," Zero to Three has become an important supportive agency to the early childhood field. The organization provides resources such as conferences, training institutes, a journal, and a book publishing press to advocates of children under the age of three.

WestEd's Center for Child and Families Studies houses the Program for Infant-Toddler Care (PITC), the largest training organization in the United States devoted to improving the quality of infant-toddler care.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). An important document to come out of the NAEYC is entitled *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Education Programs.* DAP is a statement about what the NAEYC and its members believe constitutes quality care and education for young children. The document is designed to guide professional decision making using the following three knowledge bases:

1. Knowledge about how children develop and learn, including information about ages and stages and what the appropriate experiences, materials, activities, and interactions for age and stage are
2. Knowledge about each individual child in the group
3. Knowledge about the social and cultural context in which each child is growing up

For instance, either-or decisions, such as those that compromise cultural appropriateness for age appropriateness, prioritizes one knowledge base over the others. In contrast, both-and thinking entails decision making that balances conflicting elements to ensure developmental, individual, and cultural appropriateness in all situations. The *Voices of Experience* story by Lynne Doherty Lyle a former preschool teacher, takes both-and thinking out of the realm of the abstract and brings it into an adult–child interaction that she experienced. She realized that both-and thinking validates that two different realities can exist at the same time. Sometimes such decision making requires great creativity on the part of professionals to look beyond their own perspective. The NAEYC document makes it clear that early childhood educators must themselves be learners as they work with children and families.

both-and thinking An approach to decision making in which the early-childhood educator considers what is developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate in all situations; it involves coming up with a solution that may incorporate all the conflicting elements. Both-and thinking contrasts with either-or thinking, in which the choice is between one solution or the other.

What kinds of conflicts might require both-and thinking? One common conflict is how to respond to both group needs and individual needs simultaneously. For instance, one child might need a morning nap at a time when the rest of the group is noisy and lively. An example of creative problem solving would be to find a quiet corner where the child can rest with minimum disruption.

This document encourages moving away from "either-or thinking" to "both-and thinking" and stresses that each of the three knowledge bases is dynamic and changing. Another kind of conflict involves diverse views of what children need such as when the child's home stresses interdependence instead of independence. Again, both-and thinking is called for. Sometimes what is age appropriate is not what is individually or culturally appropriate. Instead of telling the family they are wrong, the early childhood educator should try to understand their point of view. The family's cultural value may be to prolong dependence and to "baby" the child rather than to stress independence and teach self-help skills. The family may be teaching their child that it is more important to accept help from adults than to try to do

Accepting Dual Realities

It happened again; tearful, three-year-old Ben refused to get out of the car. We were in the parking lot at the grocery store, with Ben screaming, "No store!" People glanced our way as we battled in our parked car.

All my skills from working with preschoolers disappeared, and I could not distance my own feelings of frustration, fear, and shame from my son's passionate declaration of what he wanted. We were both in an emotional stew until I summoned up my teacher self and said, "I know you don't want to go to the store, but we are going anyway." Once I said this, I felt in control again and in charge. I often used this technique with children that I had worked with. It was clear, set limits, and yet validated the child's wants. Well, I thought it did.

While struggling to pull Ben from his car seat that day, I remembered someone saying that using the word "and" instead of "but" is more effective in these situations. She explained that using "and" allows for two realities to exist at the same time. These types of challenging and trying situations do not have to be either/or situations with the adult's needs being more important than a child's. The experiences and feelings could coexist.

After remembering this, I said to Ben, "I know you don't want to go into the store, *and* we are going to go." What happened? Ben kept screaming, and I realized that I too did not want to go into the store any more than he did; and we went anyway. Sometimes you must do things you don't want to do, and Ben and I could connect with each other in this shared experience. We both could feel our own feelings while knowing that there was room for both: his and mine, while in the grocery store buying something for dinner.

—Lynne Doherty Lyle

things on his or her own. Such teaching represents a cultural goal that opposes a push for independence.

Under the *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* guidelines, the early childhood educator cannot simply discount this family's approach as being "developmentally inappropriate" and ignore their goals. This situation calls for discussion—lots of discussion—until the professional and family can see each other's point of view and come to some sort of agreement. (More will be said about goal conflicts as the book progresses.)

Both editions of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* were designed to help practitioners use what is known about how children develop and learn to plan experiences that help each child move forward.

Though defining and implementing *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* started in the 1980s and 1990s, it remains important today. The twenty-first century brought a new area of focus—the creation of learning and program standards. Although the field supports standards, often the pressure to formulate

them comes from governments and other funding bodies that value teaching subject matter and skill over child development and the individual construction of knowledge. Measuring outcomes has become a huge subject of controversy in the profession as children and the programs they attend are being judged on test performance.

Types of Early Childhood Programs. There are so many different early childhood education programs that they do not always fit neatly into clear categories. Table 1.1 is an attempt to categorize, but as you read through this section you will notice that the picture is even more complex than this sampling of programs depicts.

One way to classify programs is to distinguish between full-day programs and half-day programs; whereas full-day programs usually focus primarily on child care, half-day programs usually focus more on education. The true difference between these two types of programs, however, is the length of the day. Both types care for and educate children.

A common misconception in the field is the distinction between educational programs and child care programs. However, you cannot separate care from education nor can you separate education from care. Nell Noddings has made a good case for care *always* being a part of education in her book *The Challenge to Care in Schools*. Well-trained ECE professionals who work in quality programs for young children combine education and care. The challenge for professionals, funders, and policy makers is to increase the quality in programs, mandate training for the people who staff them, and find ways to pay trained professionals a living wage. These groups work together to advocate for increased investments in professional development and compensation for early learning educators. When we invest in professional development, as this book aims to do, we are creating a qualified workforce. When we create a qualified workforce, we are cultivating the quality learning environment that sets the foundation for our children's futures—and, really, all of our futures.

Early childhood education programs can also be classified by locale—in homes or in centers. There are **center-based programs** and **family child care programs.** Family child care, though less regulated, is in the process of professionalizing itself.

A second type of home-based program is a home-based visitor program, in which a professional or paraprofessional works with families of young children in their own homes. Home-based Head Start and Early Head Start are the best-known programs of this type, but other models exist.

Another type of early childhood education program is one that primarily serves children with special needs. But because enrollment of children with special needs is increasing in other types of programs, we are starting to see fewer programs of this category. There is a growing realization that segregation robs our society of the unity it so desperately needs. Special education is the area of desegregation that the early childhood field needs to work on most, but changes are happening. Today, for example, programs in the United States are bound by law to accept any child who applies unless they can prove that they are not equipped to handle the special needs of a particular child. A program risks being

TABLE 1.1 SAMPLING OF PROGRAM TYPES

Early Care and Education Program	Full Day Half Day	Center Based Home Based	Sponsorship Funding	Age Range	Mixed Age Range	Designated Population
Family Child Care	Usually full day	Home based	Parent fees	Could be all ages	Usually	General
Child Care	Full day	Center based	Parent fees	Could be all ages	Sometimes	General
Child Development	Full day	Center based	Government and/or parent	Could be all ages	Not usually	May be limted to low income
Centers Early Learning Centers Children's Centers	Full day	Center based	Employer and/or parent	Could be all ages	Not usually	May be limited to employees
Campus Children Centers	Variable	Center based	Government or student or college or parent fees	Could be all ages	Not usually	May be general or limited to students or low-income students or to staff and faculty
Child Care for School-Age Parents	Full day	Center based	Government or school district	Usually infants and toddlers	Sometimes	Teen parents
Preschool Pre-K	Half day	Center based	Parent fees or government	Mostly 3 to 4	Sometimes	General
Head Start and Other Compensatory Education Programs	Usually half day	Center based	Government	Mostly 3 to 4	Sometimes	Low income
Surround Care	Before and after preschool, kindergarten, or primary	Center based or family child care	Parent fees or government	Could be all ages	Sometimes	General or low income
Transitional Kindergarten (signed into California Law in 2010)	Usually half day	Center based	Parent fees or government	Primarily meant for a 4-year-old who doesn't turn 5 by September 1 (not eligible for Kindergarten)	Not usually	General
Kindergarten	Usually half day	Center based	Government or private (parent fees)	5	Not usually	General
Primary	Full day until 2 or 3 p.m.	Center based	Government or private	6 to 8	Not usually	General

POINTS OF VIEW

Parent Involvement or Parents as Partners?

The parent involvement and education approach requires parents to put in so many hours doing various things for the center, either in the classroom during the week or on weekends, such as making repairs or doing yard work. They also attend classes designed to expand their knowledge of child development and improve their parenting skills through the use of positive parenting strategies.

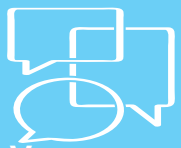
The other program considers parents as partners and focuses on looking for ways to create equality in the relationship. This means the staff or provider of such a program involves parents in both major and minor decisions about their child's care and education, including decisions about what and how their child will learn and how to best discipline and guide their child. Any parent education is designed to meet the specific needs of the particular parents enrolled.

held liable if it arbitrarily refuses to work with a particular family or if it rejects a child with special needs because it fears that working with the child would entail too much work.

Sponsorship is another way of categorizing early childhood programs. There are public-supported programs, private-nonprofit programs, and private-for-profit programs. An example of a public-supported program is **Head Start,** a comprehensive, federally funded program that since the mid-1960s has provided education, health screening, and social services to help low-income families give their children—from birth to five years of age—the start they need to succeed in public school. Some Early Head Start programs and other types of early intervention programs are examples of home visitor programs. There are also some state-supported versions of Head Start, as well as early childhood programs run by public schools. Numerous nonprofit programs—some sponsored by religious organizations—serve a variety of needs, but all are designed to provide either half-day or full-day care and education for young children. For-profit programs include both chains and independent businesses.

Employer-supported child care comes in many shapes and forms. Such programs may be run in a center built, owned, and operated by a company for its employees. Many employer-supported programs are run by child care management corporations that assume the organizational, supervisory, and liability aspects of child care.

Programs for teen parents are often housed in high schools so the infants and their mothers are on the same campus. The infants are in child care, while the mothers attend classes. The program includes a parent education component along with the child care and other supports needed for young parents to finish high school while rearing young infants. Judy is a young mother whose story Ethel Seiderman



VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

Coming Back to Child Care

When Judy returned to the child care center that she had attended just five years ago, she enrolled her own baby Mika. No one, including Judy, expected her to be back so soon.

As a young mother, Judy says that she could have easily felt defeated by her daughter's birth. It was a hard time and she now recalls how she was "ready to give up my own goals." But as Judy returned home to the place where she and her family spent much of her childhood, she realized that she was not alone. The same people who had cared for her as a child cared for her as an adult. They welcomed her and Mika back to the center.

With the security of child care and support of others, Judy found her way. She looks forward to graduating from college. Her daughter Mika is thriving too. She feels fortunate to have found the way back. She credits the center as being a special place:

> What makes this program a special place is their focus on children *and* their families. The staff is like family. They check in with every parent so that I have a strong sense of involvement in my daughter's education and care. As parents, we choose activities for our children and ourselves. By participating, being with other parents, I found the strength, support, and courage to do what I needed to do.

Today, Judy is an advocate for quality child care. She recalled testifying at the state capitol. "I was scared but I learned that my voice advocates easily; it all came out and it has a type of power similar to the power of my smile I give my daughter when she looks up at me. By the time I finished speaking, I felt as if I could cry because for the first time I heard what it was that makes me able to do what I do. *It's knowing that my daughter is well cared for . . . but so am I.*"

–Ethel Seiderman

tells in the *Voices of Experience* box above. Seiderman is the founder of Parent Services Project, an organization dedicated to helping early care and education centers understand the benefits of family-centered programs.

A category that deserves special mention is the **parent cooperative preschool,** also known as a "parent-participation nursery school." This type of program is designed primarily for parent education; parents are educated through the program but they also serve as "co-teachers." Parent cooperatives, however, are not the only programs with a goal of parent education. Most programs, in keeping with one of the principles of the early childhood profession, regard themselves as serving families, not just children. Parent education and/or involvement is almost always part of the philosophical statement or goals of most early childhood programs. Although today programs are increasingly aiming at a "parents-as-partners" approach. See *Points of View* for different approaches to parental inclusion.

To become an early childhood educator, you will need education and training to provide you with the necessary skills, vocabulary, and concepts. But to enter the field of early childhood education, you will also need to know some of its history because history is an important part of being socialized into a profession, we will take a look at early childhood education's past in the following section.

CHILD-DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

child development The study of how children change as they grow from a qualitative rather than a merely quantitative standpoint.

The field of science that studies how children change as they grow is called **child development.** Child-development researchers study all aspects of children, but most focus on specific areas, such as how children develop thinking or social skills. The extensive study of children in the past has yielded much information that has been useful in designing a variety of early childhood programs. It is a very important field of study because (1) from the time of conception to kindergarten, development from conception through the first five years of life proceeds at a pace that exceeds that of any other stage in life, and (2) what happens during this period of development sets the stage.

What happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot, not because this period of development provides an indelible blueprint for adult well-being, but because it sets either a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows.

Historical Trends and Figures

Child development is a relatively modern area of study and *childhood* as a concept was virtually unexplored until the eighteenth century. For example, in seventeenth-century Europe, children were treated as miniature adults. Over time, however, child study has grown into a legitimate academic discipline.

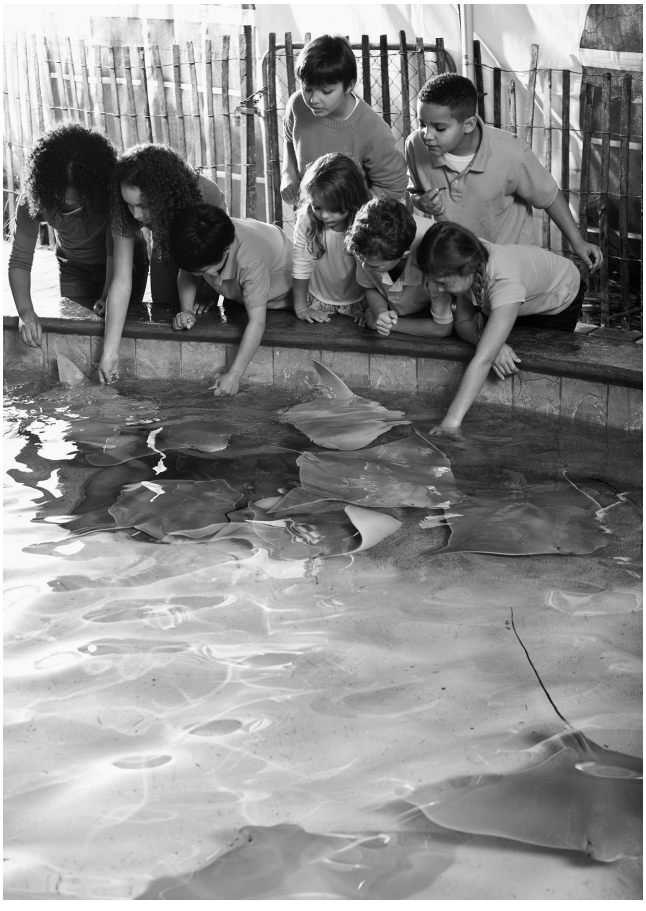
The Nature–Nurture Question. One of the key questions child-development researchers explore is: What causes children to turn out the way they do? The possible answers often fall in between or on either side of the **nature–nurture question:** Do children turn out the way they do because of their heredity, their genetic makeup (nature), or because of how they are raised, their environment (nurture)? Today, virtually all researchers conclude that the development of a child is a highly complex process that is influenced by the interplay of nature (genes) and nurture (the environment). While each theorist/theory emphasizes a different proportion of these two forces, development is a dynamic process in which nature influences nurture and vice versa.

nature–nurture question The question that asks, "What causes children to turn out the way they do?" In other words, is a child's development influenced more by his or her heredity (nature) or by his or her environment (nurture)? This question can be controversial because nature proponents insist that genetics plays a stronger role in influencing development, while nurture proponents make the same claim about environmental experiences.

The Question of the Basic Nature of the Child. The nature–nurture question is a recurrent theme in child-development history. Another theme also involves a question that has been posed by philosophers and, more recently, researchers: what is the basic nature of the child?

The Church View: The Child Is Basically Evil. Down through the ages, beliefs about the basic nature of the child have influenced how people understood and treated children. The church, the highest authority in Western society before the Renaissance, had its own theory about a child's basic nature. According to early church philosophy, each child carried the seed of evil as a result of being born in original sin, and only the strictest discipline could keep a child from becoming more sinful.

Few child-development experts adopt such an extreme view today, but the idea still exists. Some believe the child's wild nature must be tamed, shaped, and molded.



Experts have long debated whether heredity or environment determines the ways in which a child develops. Today, most agree that the interaction of both genetics and environment influences a child's development.
Kali9/Getty Images

Locke and the Blank-Slate View. The English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) was the first to write about the newborn as a blank slate, a *tabula rasa*. He was the first to state that the child had no inborn ability to influence his or her own development, and only the environment could determine the outcome. Locke saw the child as a passive recipient of experience rather than someone with specific tendencies to think or behave one way or another. (A whole line of researchers called "behaviorists" have descended from this point of view. A little later in this chapter, we'll take a look at John Watson and B. F. Skinner, two of the best-known behaviorists.)

According to the blank-slate theory, the child is open to all forms of learning that will eventually mold that child into an adult capable of functioning successfully in society. Development comes from the home and parents, but outside early experiences influence development too. The concept of the child as a blank slate places tremendous responsibility on those who are in a position to influence the child's development. Proponents of this view see both parents and educators as having the power to determine the character, talents, and inclinations of the individual—even his or her happiness. Some still believe in this view—that the way a child turns out

is purely a result of his or her environment, with innate ability having nothing to do with it. If the children come out fine, parents and educators are lauded; if they do not, then they are blamed.

Rousseau and the Little-Angel View. Some see children as pure and innocent beings with great individual potential that only needs to be unlocked. In this view, an infant is like a seed. Give a seed good soil, nutrients, water, sunshine, and fresh air, and nature will do the rest. So it is with a child. If his or her needs are met, the child will bloom without training, supervision, punishments, or rewards.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), a French philosopher, held this view. He believed infants were born with an inherent drive toward goodness that is vulnerable to corruption by adults. His view was very different from those who saw the child as evil or as a blank slate. Rather than constantly guiding or correcting children, Rousseau advocated for allowing them to develop naturally, with a minimum of adult supervision. Rousseau believed that nature took care of development. The very word "development" means to unfold, which is how Rousseau saw the childhood process: a child unfolds the way a rosebud does. You cannot force the petals open; they will naturally open on their own.

Some preschools in the first half of the twentieth century and beyond were guided by this view of the child as being inherently good; they initiated a movement of open, or free, schools, which peaked in the 1960s. Children were gathered into groups in natural settings and encouraged to explore and experiment with mud, water, sand, clay, and each other as media for education. Children were free to be outdoors, free to follow their own inclinations and interests without worries about objectives, accountability, productivity, or future academic demands. Society today has moved in the opposite direction to such an extreme that a movement has restarted to encourage children to play outside in nature.

So three historical trends underpin early childhood theory today: the church's idea of original sin, Locke's emphasis on the environment, and Rousseau's belief in the natural process of development. These basic views, as well as scientific research, still influence child-development theory today. To see an example of how these views influenced a group of early childhood educators, read the *Focus on Diversity* box on page 22. However, this does not mean that everyone agrees. Disagreement occurs from time to time among early childhood professionals who look to child-development theory to guide them in program design. In fact, current debate today centers around the inclusion of culturally diverse views in the study of child development—a field that historically has been dominated by research from white male figures.

Two other theorists have also contributed to the notions about the nature of the child and human nature in more recent years. Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), a leader in the humanistic psychology movement, was born in Brooklyn, New York, to Russian Jewish immigrant parents. He was interested in what motivates people, not studying either the mentally ill or altering behavior through reward systems like his other peers. He was interested in human potential and uncovering what makes people successful. Personal growth and fulfillment were his goal. With that in mind,

he created a hierarchy of needs, and at the top was what he called self-actualization. Maslow's theory of self-actualization asserts that regardless of age, gender, or cultural background, every human being is motivated by a set of basic needs. The most critical needs form the base from which the other needs can be met. The top level can only be reached once the more basic needs are met. When these basic needs are met, the person is free to seek self-fulfillment. "Peak experiences," which have a spiritual flavor, intrigued him. Those kinds of experiences bring a person a sense of purpose, a feeling of integration and personal fulfillment. He wrote *Toward a Psychology of Being,* an influential book of its time that is still relevant today. This book incorporates Maslow's positive outlook on human nature and human development.

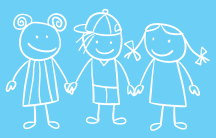
Uri Bronfenbrenner, born in 1917 in Moscow, came to the United States at the age of six. A professor at Cornell, he applied developmental research to both policy and practice. Whereas Maslow focused on individuals, Bronfenbrenner taught us to see individuals within a context, warning early childhood practitioners to expand their focus from the child alone to the family and community, and to regard the context as an important factor in child growth and development. Children come to our programs nested in ever larger contexts, which influences them and upon which they also have some influence. Bronfenbrenner's work has contributed much to the themes of this book, especially those that relate to diversity and families. As a result of Bronfenbrenner's work, is some programs are beginning to move from calling themselves child-centered to calling themselves family-centered programs. Bronfenbrenner has also played an active role in the design of developmental programs in the United States and elsewhere; he was one of the founders of Head Start. His book *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design* contains information about looking at children within the context of their families, communities, and the greater society.

Child-Development Theorists and Their Theories

A succession of scientists has contributed to the study of the young child and to the theories that influence professionals today. The way we currently see, understand, and deal with children is greatly influenced by historical theoretical frameworks.

Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) journals of his own children marked the beginning of a scientific approach to child study. Later, G. Stanley Hall (1844–1924) took another scientific step forward by focusing on groups of children rather than on the individual child. Hall also kept anecdotal records on the developmental stages of young children.

Hall's student Arnold Gesell, who was mentioned earlier, continued with a systematic scientific study of developmental stages by filming a number of infants month after month to record the average age at which they rolled over, sat up, started to walk, and so on. From his careful studies, he came up with norms to define the physical milestones of development.



FOCUS ON DIVERSITY

Differing Views on the "Nature of the Child"

At a staff retreat for small, church-affiliated preschool programs, a facilitator was brought in to do a workshop on discipline. She started by talking about how each person has a personal view of "the nature of the child." She suggested that these views lie along a continuum. At one end is the seed image, which she related to Rousseau's view of the child as a "little angel." At the other end is the "little devil," which she related to the theory that a child is born in sin and only by the use of a "firm hand" will a child move toward a path of good behavior. Then she asked participants to arrange themselves along an imaginary line, placing themselves in the position that corresponded to their personal view of the nature of the child. Most of the staff arranged themselves at various points on the angel half of the continuum. Two people were the exception, however; one stood on the far end of the devil side, and one refused to place herself on the line at all. When asked to explain why they chose to stand where they did, most participants spoke of their varying degrees of faith in the innocence of children. The person on the "little devil" end of the continuum turned out to be a minister of the church, and he spoke eloquently about the power of temptation. The facilitator noted that many of the staff were members of his congregation and wondered if their early childhood training had overridden their church's emphasis on people as sinners. The person who stood outside the line had a degree in psychology and spoke equally eloquently about how there was no "basic instinct" or "human nature." She believed that children were a product of their environment. After presenting the different views so visually, the facilitator was able to talk about how the ways in which we discipline relate to what we believe about children, their nature, and their needs.

Emmi Pikler. Dr. Emmi Pikler (1902–1984) was a pediatrician who developed her own theory of development and developmental stages in the 1930s in Budapest, Hungary. Because of World War II and the Iron Curtain that separated Eastern Europe from the West, most Americans had not heard of Pikler until recently. However, Pikler, a devoted researcher deserves the same recognition as Western-stage theorists. She is now getting attention for the practices she established that go along with her stage theory. See more about Pikler in the next section on Pioneer Educators.

Jean Piaget: Cognitive Theory. Jean Piaget (1896–1980) was less interested in the physical milestones, like sitting up and walking, than in the cognitive milestones that mark developmental stages of intelligence. Piaget is best known for his concept of **cognitive stages.** He is considered one of the giants of child development.

Piaget spent his life studying how children think. He observed children and conducted clinical interviews for years, to determine how their minds develop rationality. According to Piaget's theory, children construct knowledge and develop their reasoning abilities through interactions with people and the environment as they seek to understand the world and how it works. Initially, children explore only on

very concrete levels, but eventually children begin to understand and explain things without physically trying them out each time. Piaget's final stage of cognitive development occurs when adolescents can use logic to talk about ideas.

stage theorist A theorist who believes that children develop according to specific, sequential stages of development.

Piaget was a **stage theorist.** He believed in the literal meaning of the term *development,* or that stages *unfold* through maturation. He described development as occurring in distinct steps that always fall in the same order. (Piaget's stages that are most pertinent to the early childhood educator—those covering children from birth through age eight—are laid out in Table 1.2.)

Piaget believed in putting children together in a rich environment and letting them interact in an exploratory way. Piaget believed that thinking and learning is a process of interaction between a child and their environment. Piaget also believed that all species inherit a basic tendency to organize their lives and adapt to the world around them. Piaget believed that children actively construct knowledge on an ongoing basis. Thus, he believed that children learn best when they are actually doing the work themselves, rather than being shown, or explained to. Like Pikler, he did not stress right answers, nor did he believe in molding and shaping through a system of rewards. You'll see Piaget's and Pikler's theories in practice throughout the book, but especially in Chapter 4, which focuses on the benefits of play and connections to learning and development.

Thanks to Piaget, Pikler, and others, young children are generally viewed as active learners. Those who follow Piaget's theory are adamant that children be allowed to have exploratory, firsthand experiences. Hands-on learning is more important than sitting and listening to a teacher.

According to Piaget, imaginative and pretend playing are also important to cognitive development; children create mental images through this kind of play, thus taking an early step in symbolic development. As a result, most early childhood programs have a dramatic play area, where children are encouraged to dress up and play pretend.

Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson: Psychoanalytic and Psychosocial Theories. Rather than focus on the mind and its development, psychoanalytic theory focuses on

TABLE 1.2 JEAN PIAGET: STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT[3]

Age	Stage	Description
0–2	Sensorimotor	Children use their bodies and senses to understand the world. By the end of this stage, the infant has begun to use mental as well as physical activity to learn.
2–6	Preoperational	Children engage in pretend play and talk, which shows they are able to use symbolic thinking. Children's thinking still has limitations: it is egocentric and not always logical but based more on intuition and perception. They are still working out the difference between reality and fantasy.
7–11	Concrete operational	Children think in concrete terms. They can understand their world more objectively and rationally. They are able to classify and conserve.

TABLE 1.3 SIGMUND FREUD: PSYCHOSEXUAL STAGES[4]

Age	Stage	Description
0–1	Oral	The child's focus is on the pleasures and sensations of the mouth and the area surrounding it. Feeding is a major source of pleasure and satisfaction.
1–3	Anal	The anus is the major focus of pleasures and sensations. Toilet training is a primary task of this stage.
3–6	Phallic	The genitals and their stimulation are the focus of pleasure. The Oedipus and Electra complexes are part of this stage.
7–11	Latency	Sexual needs are on hold, and pleasure is derived from a variety of activities.

feelings. The leaders in this field were Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and Erik Erikson (1902–1994), both of whom were concerned with the subconscious, what is hidden deep in the psyche.

Sigmund Freud, the "Father of Psychology," studied troubled adults and came up with theories about how children develop in **psychosexual stages** (see Table 1.3, which shows the stages that cover the early childhood years). He believed that early experiences determine personality development and create specific outcomes. He also described how early experiences and feelings come out symbolically in children's play. In most early childhood programs, you can find children working out emotional issues through pretend play in psychoanalytic fashion. Little girls in the housekeeping corner who are playing doctor by giving each other shots with kitchen utensils are exploring their own experiences—trying on roles and playing out fears and anxieties.

Piaget would have looked at the same scene and said it demonstrates that the children are developing symbolic representation; they use one object to stand for another, showing that they have an image of the real object in their minds. Cognitive theory and psychoanalytic theory are two different ways of looking at the same behavior. But like Piaget, Freud was a stage theorist; that is, he believed that the psyche unfolds in successive stages.

Watch a newborn's mouth. It's constantly busy. The newborn period—the first year of life—is what Freud termed the "oral stage." Oral satisfaction is what newborns seek. It's not just the food in the stomach but the feelings in the mouth. Following the oral stage is what Freud termed the "anal stage"—a period in which toilet training is the main event and must be handled sensitively.

Erik Erikson was Freud's student, but he became an important early childhood theorist in his own right. Erikson rethought Freud's stages, calling his own viewpoint "psychosocial theory." Erikson saw the first year of life as the time infants develop a sense of basic trust. During this first **psychosocial stage,** they come to see the world as a safe and secure place when their needs are met, when someone consistently heeds their cries and feeds them; however, they come to see the world as cold and cruel when the opposite happens and they do not receive responsive caregiving and nobody seems to care. It is not just what is done to them but also how it's done. Infants who seldom or inconsistently get loving treatment learn mistrust. Infants who

TABLE 1.4 ERIK ERIKSON: PSYCHOSOCIAL STAGES[5]

Age	Stage	Description	Implications for Practice
0–1	Trust versus mistrust	Children come to trust the world if their needs are met and they are cared for in sensitive ways. Otherwise, they see the world as a cold and hostile place and learn to mistrust it.	• Caregivers nurture infants during routines (i.e., eating, sleeping, changes, etc.). • Caregivers should be responsive to distress. • Primary caregiving is a good practice to support healthy secure attachments at this stage.
1–3	Autonomy versus shame and doubt	Children work at becoming independent in areas such as feeding and toileting. They can talk and assert themselves. If they do not learn some degree of self-sufficiency, they come to doubt their own abilities and feel shame.	• Caregivers should offer children simple choices. • Caregivers should eliminate false choices. • Caregivers should set clear limits. • Caregivers should accept alternating needs for independence and dependence.
3–6	Initiative versus guilt	Children thrust themselves into the world, trying new activities, exploring new directions. If their boundaries are too tight and they continually overstep them, they experience a sense of guilt about these inner urges that keep leading them into trouble.	• Caregivers should encourage independence. • Caregivers should focus on gains, not mistakes. • Caregivers should consider individual differences. • Curriculum should focus on "real-life" things.
7–10	Industry versus inferiority	Children learn competency and strive to be productive in a variety of areas. If they fail to learn new skills and feel unproductive, they are left with a sense of inferiority.	• Caregivers should set children up for success not failure. • Caregivers should offer support and encouragement. • Children should be taught to explore, embrace new experiences, and enjoy challenges. • Caregivers should try to instill a growth mindset in children at this stage, helping them believe that abilities can be developed and strengthened by persistence and effort.

develop a sense of trust develop an external believe system that adults will meet their needs and an internal belief system that affirms their own power to effect change and cope with a variety of circumstances. The opposite occurs in infants who do not develop a sense of mistrust. In Erikson's view, the newborn period is followed by a stage of autonomy, when children learn to say no and protest. Children who successfully emerge from this stage acquire a strong sense of self and a sense of independence without suffering the extremes of shame and self-doubt. (Table 1.4 lists Erikson's stages of development that cover the early childhood years.)

John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner: Behaviorism and Learning Theory. John B. Watson (1878–1958), an American psychologist and the "Father of Modern **Behaviorism**," had another view of children. He believed that all behavior was learned and that training was the way to change it. In his theoretical view, waiting out a stage didn't make any sense.

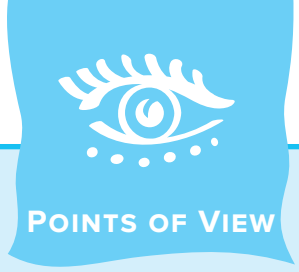
behaviorism The scientific study of behaviors that can be seen and measured. Behaviorism, also called "learning theory" attributes all developmental change to environmental influences.

A star chart is a classic example of a behaviorist tool for reinforcing desired behaviors—in this case the performance of chores at home.
Monkey Business Images/ Shutterstock

Both Watson and B. F. Skinner (1904–1990), another famous behaviorist, believed that only that which can be seen and measured—outward behavior—was worth studying. Unobservable concepts like "mind" and "emotions" were unimportant. They rejected the idea of development unfolding in ages and stages, and they did not believe in innate behavior or instincts. According to Watson and Skinner, all behavior is learned through the consequences of the individual's actions: a child will repeat behavior that is reinforced and cease behavior that is not reinforced. Adults who use rewards (reinforcement)—simple ones like acknowledgment or praise or complex ones like token economies—are influenced by **learning theory** based on behavioristic principles. Nevertheless, parents and teachers sometimes misunderstand the principles of behavioristic learning theory: simply by paying attention to negative behavior, even in the name of correcting it, adults in fact reinforce that behavior. According to behaviorists, it is better to pay attention to the behavior you *want* and ignore behavior you don't want.

Albert Bandura: Social Learning Theory. Albert Bandura (1925–) is one of the researchers associated with a branch of behavioristic learning theory called **social learning theory,** which focuses on the significance of modeling and imitation in a child's development. In this view, children do not only learn by being reinforced; they also learn by observing others. Children tend to behave like the people in their lives, identifying with some and failing to identify with others.

Early childhood educators need to be constantly aware of their role as models for children. Taking this theory into practice, Chapters 6 and 7 directly focus on the implications of social learning theory for early childhood educators by discussing in detail how they are role models for children. It is quite a responsibility for adults, teachers, and parents alike to set good examples and also counteract the models



POINTS OF VIEW

Hands Off or Hands On?

One teacher and her co-teacher, both well versed in Piaget, set up an interesting, challenging, developmentally appropriate classroom and then sit back to observe how the children use it. The two adults expect the children to explore, experiment, and discover for themselves what they can learn from all the rich materials, toys, books, and equipment available to them. Although they keep track of the children's learning and development, they don't direct it. They facilitate rather than teach. They intervene periodically when children need help and guidance.

Another teacher and his co-teacher in a different program introduce each material and piece of equipment to the children and teach them exactly how to use it. They work with the children individually and in small groups, observing what the children have learned and what they are ready to learn next. Based on this information they present activities and materials designed to always keep the children moving forward in their learning and development. They both teach and facilitate. They also encourage children who know how to do something to help children who don't have the same skills.

children see in the media. Adults can tell little boys not to be aggressive and little girls not to act helpless, but children are more apt to copy the models around them than to pay attention to words. According to social learning theorists, "Do as I say, not as I do" does not work, no matter how often you say it.

Lev Vygotsky: Social Context and the Construction of Meaning. Because social context is a significant concern of contemporary early childhood professionals, the **sociocultural theory** of Russian researcher Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) has experienced recent popularity. Vygotsky and Erik Erikson were both interested in the effect of culture on development. Like Erikson, Vygotsky believed in the influence of culture on childhood development, but Vygotsky was not a Freudian. His interest, like Piaget's, was cognitive development. Vygotsky believed, as did Piaget, that children *construct* knowledge—they don't just take it in. They both agreed that learning is active and constructed. Vygotsky believed in the power of language and in social interaction as a vital ingredient in learning and development.

Unlike Piaget, however, Vygotsky didn't believe in letting children explore and experiment without adult help. Vygotsky was an advocate of what's called **scaffolding;** that is, providing learners with support and assistance. According to Vygotsky, assisted performance is fine—even desired. Vygotsky believed that interaction and instruction were critical factors of a child's cognitive development and that a child's level of thinking could be advanced by just such interaction. According to Piaget, children should be left alone to explore the environment and discover what they can do in it without adult help. Piaget insisted that while children needed to interact with people and objects to learn, the stages of thinking were still bound by maturation. See the *Points of View* box above for a look at how two different

scaffolding A form of assistance that supports and furthers understanding and performance in a learner.

teachers put Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories into practice. Although the examples may seem extreme, they are based on real teachers, both of whom regard relationships with the children as a primary goal. They just have different ways of approaching the teaching/learning process. Despite these two contrasting approaches, it is important to acknowledge that many teachers have integrated Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories.

Here we have an example of how two theories—two different ideas about development and what children need—conflict with each other. Piaget was critical of educators who stressed right answers and hurried children toward a goal. In response to such educators, he might have said, "You're placing too much stress on getting things right and pushing children when they aren't ready." In contrast, Vygotsky might have argued, "Why wait when you can help a little?"

There are all kinds of theories. Whose theories are right? Whose theories are wrong? There is no clear-cut right or wrong with theories of early childhood education. Even though one theory may conflict with another, each has something to contribute to our understanding of children. Educated professionals have their favorite theories and lean toward some more than others, but no early childhood educator can afford to completely dismiss specific theories. Being an eclectic educator, one who is selective, is not a weakness but a strength.

PIONEER EDUCATORS

The theorists just discussed contributed much to the field of early childhood education, but they were not primarily educators. This section will look at some well-known early childhood educators and the institutions they created.

One such educator was J. H. Pestalozzi (1746–1827), who started a school in Switzerland based on the principle that education should follow the child's nature. He believed that children learn through activity and sensory experiences, and he stressed an integrated curriculum.

Pestalozzi influenced Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852), a German educator who became known as the "Father of Kindergarten" by creating that institution. Froebel brought play into education. He thought of young children as seeds and saw the educator's role as gardener. Hence, the name *kindergarten,* which in German means "garden of children."

Maria Montessori (1870–1952), who was the first woman physician in Italy, is best known as an educator. She created her own brand of education, which still survives under her name to this day. She emphasized the active involvement of children in the learning process and promoted the concept of a prepared environment. Child-sized furniture and specific kinds of self-correcting learning materials were two contributions of the **Montessori** program.

John Dewey (1858–1952), an American, created the progressive education movement. Like his forerunners, he also advocated experiential learning. He believed that curriculum should be built on the interests of the children and that subject matter should be integrated into those interests. From Dewey comes the term **child-centered curriculum.**