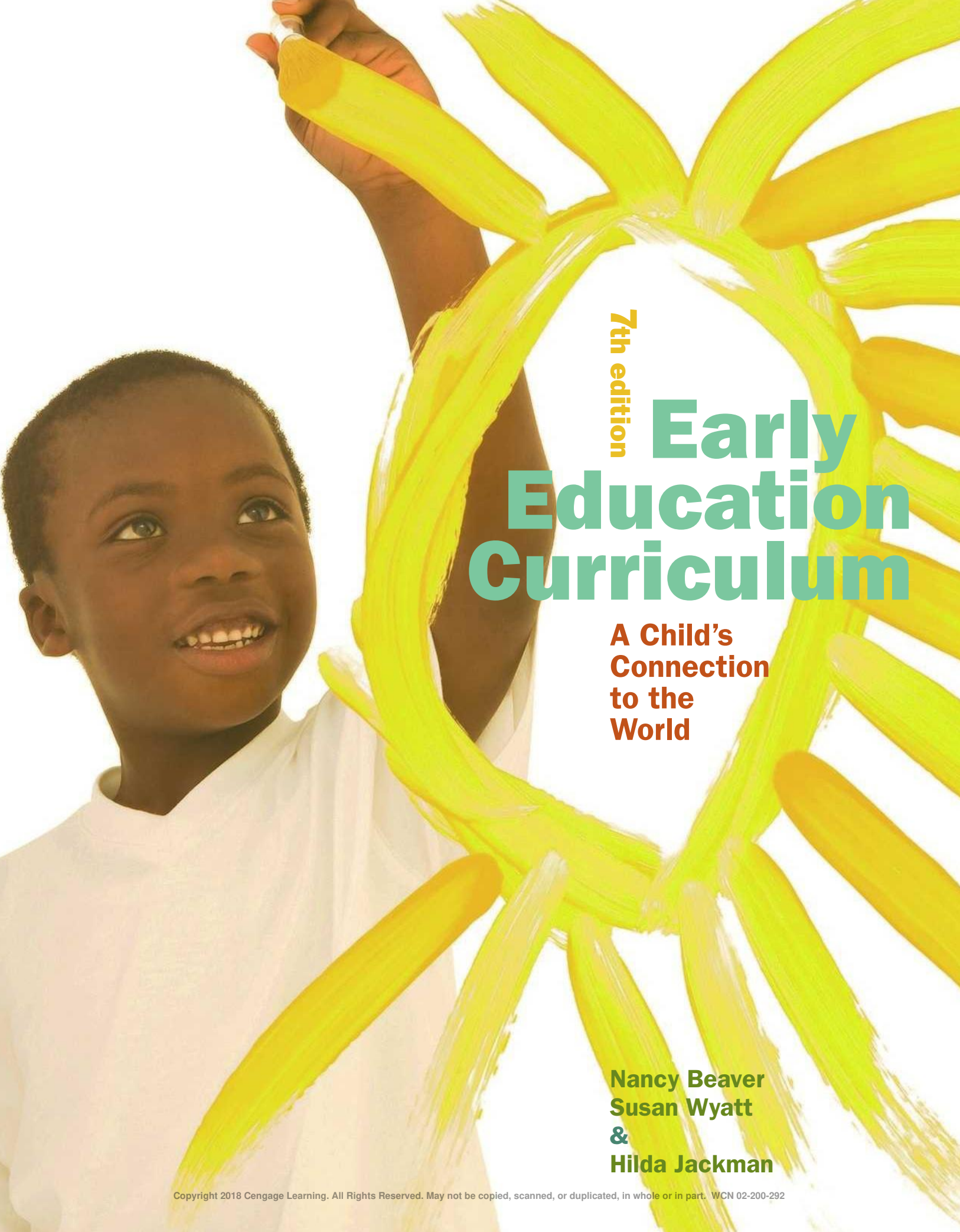

7th edition

Early Education Curriculum

A Child's Connection to the World

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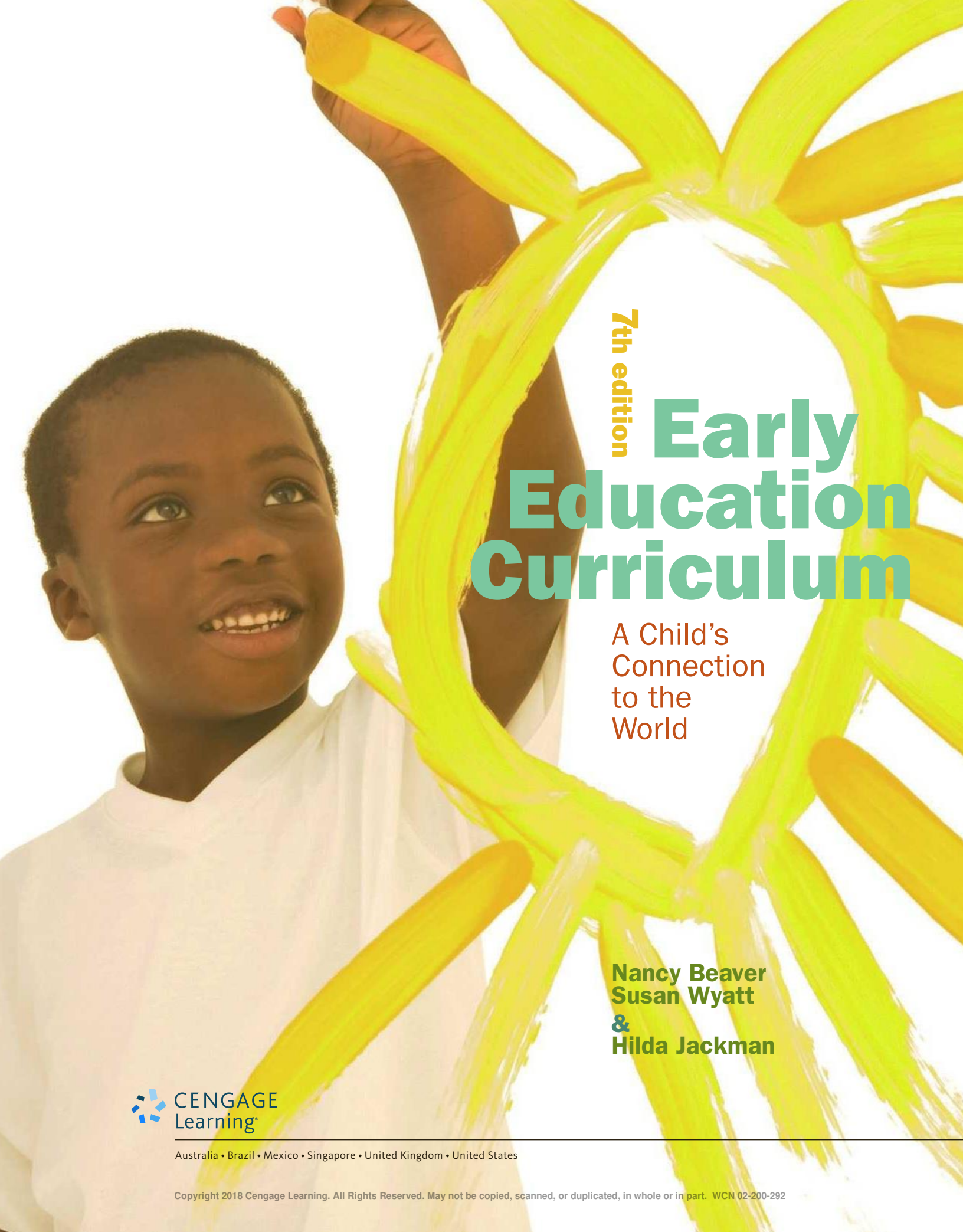
&
Hilda Jackman



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***Early Education Curriculum, A Child's Connection to the World*, Seventh Edition**
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I dedicate this to my daughter, Stephanie, the light of my life, and husband, Dom, who supported me with loving care through the revision of this textbook.

—NB

I dedicate this book to all my guys: Frank, Christopher, Patrick, and Brandon, who have never questioned or complained about my late nights and the bags of work I bring home on a regular basis. And also to my newest children, Sarah and Kara, and my multiple grandchildren who let me try out new ideas on them.

—SW

This book is lovingly dedicated to my granddaughters Cambria and Rachel and to the men in my life: my husband, Phil, my sons, Stephen and Larry, my brother, Rick… and, as always, to my nephew Jared.

—HJ

Brief Contents

Contents

Preface

Research confirms the value of early education for young children. Our early childhood profession continues to guide us with new and effective teaching applications, position statements, and developmentally appropriate practices. All three authors are colleagues **with 46 years of experience as teachers.** They have worked together as part of the Dallas County Community College District's Child Development/Early Childhood Education department. Our goal is to help students and developing professionals make informed decisions about curriculum content. To that end, the focus of *Early Education Curriculum: A Child's Connection to the Word, seventh edition,* remains the same: *the children* and the dedicated early childhood professionals who contribute daily to improve the lives of children everywhere.

Philosophies of This Book

We should listen to the children and concentrate our efforts on the development, needs, abilities, and interests of all children, including those with cultural, linguistic, and other diversities, as we plan our early childhood curriculum. In response to the needs of our students, the early childhood profession is dedicated to discovering new knowledge through research and new professional positions, and to establishing inclusiveness, equity, equality, and diversity through developmentally appropriate practices. It is the role of early education curriculum to integrate these insights into each classroom, from infancy through the early primary years.

In this seventh edition, the following interconnecting philosophies are underscored.

- The first advocates that curriculum be *child centered and child initiated*, that it is sensitive to, and supportive of, the development of young children, individually and in a group, emphasizing acceptance of each and every child. This includes acceptance of cultural, linguistic, gender, family orientation, and ability diversity in young children.
- The second focus is on the *curriculum* itself, which provides for all of a child's development by planning developmentally appropriate experiences that build on what children already know and are able to do. New findings inform us even more about early cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. These facts help us to make connections as to how we teach and how children learn.
- The third philosophy of this text is to encourage children to *learn by doing*. This encourages experimentation, exploration, self-control, and the building of a positive self-image ("I can do it myself!").
- The fourth recognizes the importance of *cultural context* in the development and learning of young children. Growing up as members of families and communities, children come to us with rich backgrounds of cultural experiences. Now, more than ever, the curriculum should promote opportunities to support a child's cultural, linguistic, gender, family orientation, and diversity.
- The fifth belief advocates developing a learning environment that invites *creativity*. This provides opportunities for unevaluated discovery and activity, while promoting acceptance and respect for one another's creations. This also helps one to develop an awareness that the process of creative thinking is complex.

- The sixth concept involves reciprocal *relationships between teachers and families*. Positive communication between home and school is crucial to providing a consistent and beneficial experience for young children.
- The seventh philosophy recommends that curriculum facilitate *physical activity and play* by integrating movement within activities throughout the day. Each of these philosophies allows children to make choices and is nourished by play. With less time and opportunity for children to play, it is critical for us to encourage and support play in all our early childhood programs.

To best address these interconnecting philosophies, coverage in this edition has been expanded to all age groups through second grade and includes hot topics in Brain Research, reflective practice, intentional teaching, hands-on teaching ideas, and using the environment as a teaching tool. The research behind the techniques discussed has been further highlighted in this edition, whereas curriculum chapters will consistently include headings on "Technology" and "Diversity."

Intended Audience

This book is designed for a beginning student as well as an experienced teacher looking for current early childhood philosophies, research, curriculum resources and activities, and fresh ideas and insights. It can be used by those in two-year colleges or four-year university early education curriculum courses, graduate classes, mini/fast-track courses, distance learning, and workshop/seminar courses for continuing education of teachers. It is also applicable for students working toward the Council for Professional Recognition (CDA) credential or any professional working with children and families.

Chapter Changes and Highlights

The text remains divided into two parts. Part One, "Preparing for Learning through Assessment, Curriculum, and the Environment," presents the elements of the foundation of early education curriculum, and includes four chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1, *Starting the Process*, gives early childhood historical information, learning, and developmental theories of early childhood education; the importance of play in the lives of children; and communication with parents. The chapter has been thoroughly updated, including new standards and new references; outdated references and material have been deleted throughout. The Brain Research feature identifies how knowledge of brain development is crucial to an understanding of how to create curriculum.
- Chapter 2, *Observation and Assessment,* describes the purposes and process of observation and assessment; and also presents guidelines for assessment. This topic area is important because of the increase in reliance on the use of standards to guide our decisions about what and how we teach. These standards have been updated and are based on the use of strong statistical data that help formulate our practices. Teachers have to have the ability to use appropriate observation and assessment techniques to create the data needed to begin the development of curriculum, experiences, and environments to support children's development and learning. A new feature of this chapter is about the use of technology in assessment.
- Chapter 3, *Creating Curriculum*, offers examples of curriculum models and programs; explains the process of curriculum development, including multicultural, anti-bias, and special needs considerations; and describes the development of concepts and skills, themes, specific lesson and activity plans. More coverage of the curriculum cycle and use of technology in assessment and curriculum planning has been added to this chapter.
- Chapter 4, *The Learning Environment,* reflects the continuing focus of this text on the learning environment. It describes developmentally appropriate early learning environments, indoor and outdoor; selection of equipment, materials, and supplies; and play guidance, including transitions. It also includes the first environment checklist that will also be included in Chapters 5 to 13. Those checklists will be on specific environmental areas that are described in those particular chapters. A floor plan was added to this chapter to accommodate the primary grades that were not covered in the previous edition.

These four chapters form the foundation for the remaining chapters.

Part Two, "Discovering and Expanding the Early Education Curriculum," explores each curriculum area in depth, taking into consideration the individual child, group of children, the process of setting up appropriate environments with a chapter checklist for use in observing environments, special subject content, information on the use of technology, more ideas to involve parents, meeting diverse needs, and integration of all curricula. Chapters 5 to 13 present developmentally appropriate activities for each age group and encourage self-esteem and creativity development. These chapters are organized to provide greater clarity and consistency to support better comprehension by the student.

- Chapter 5, *Language and Literacy,* describes the acquisition of languages with emphasis on dual-language learning. A major focus is teaching strategies and providing practical experiences and materials to support the development of language and literacy skills through literature. An additional activity plan has been add to extend the age range of activity plan samples through the primary grades. The brain research feature has added a description of new research related to the 50-million word gap by age 3 for low-income children. All references have been updated.

- Chapter 6, *Creativity: Art and Music*, describes the creative process with a specific emphasis on art and music. A focus of this chapter is how children discover their own original ways to explore forms of art and types of music and dance. Ideas are shared concerning the creation of an aesthetic environment and the use of the outdoors to foster creativity. Practical teaching strategies, experiences, and materials (including homemade instruments) support the development of creativity in diverse children. An additional activity plan has been added to this chapter to extend the age range covered to the primary grades. New and updated information has been added related to technology ideas for Music teachers. All references have been updated.
- Chapter 7, *The Child's World: Social Studies and Dramatic Play,* describes themes and appropriate content for social studies in the early childhood curriculum. The chapter includes developmental theories and research on the stages of play and types of social dramatic play. A thorough discussion of dramatic play includes the use of puppets and prop boxes and provides practical ideas for use in the classroom. The chapter includes a discussion of field trips as concrete experiences introducing children to the social world. The chapter includes additional information about multicultural play by including materials form different cultures. A new video "Multicultural Lessons: Embracing Similarities and Differences in Preschool Education" has been added to the MindTap digital platform. All references have been updated.
- Chapter 8, *Sensory Play*, discusses how the senses are used as learning portals and how every day, the early childhood classrooms should be filled with activities that involve multiple senses. Piaget's sensory motor period of learning, Goscoyne's continuum of fluid play process, and sensory integration are defined. A curriculum planning web for the book, *My Five Senses* demonstrates how to integrate sensory learning throughout the curriculum. The chapter discusses how to use technology and incorporate diversity into sensory play. New brain research on sensory development and an additional activity plan for 2- and 3-year-olds have been added to this chapter. All references have been updated.
- Chapter 9, *Science*, describes science for young children as engaging children in active construction of ideas and explanations to develop both inquiry and process skills. Categories of science to be explored identified by the National Research Council, are defined and the development of the brain's executive function is explained. The chapter relates the stages of child development to scientific learning and evaluates how the preparation of the environment supports that learning as children use the scientific process to make and test predictions, observe, solve problems, and make connections. The chapter contains many activity ideas for integrating science throughout the curriculum including explorations of earth elements such as water, ecology, animals, nutrition, and cooking. The use of technology in documenting science projects and the use of cooking experiences to explore diversity are discussed. New information on brain research has been added. There is an increased focus on nature in this addition, including the creation of outdoor classrooms that incorporate a variety of natural elements for children's play. An additional activity plan for 2- and 3-year-olds has been added to this chapter. All references have been updated.
- Chapter 10, *Math*, discusses the importance of providing hands-on, developmentally appropriate math experiences in a meaningful context that give young children opportunities to develop math awareness and understanding. The chapter contains a thorough explanation of mathematical terms and teaching strategies. There is a focus on how the environment is set up to provide opportunities for children to develop number sense and logical ways of thinking about time, space, and other mathematical ideas, as they discover math concepts through the process of play. New research on the use of technology has been added and the term *cardinality* has been added to key terms. An additional activity plan for primary grades has been added to this chapter as well. A new video titled *Using Read-Alouds to Develop Math and Literacy Skills* has been added to the MindTap digital platform. All references have been updated.
- Chapter 11, *Fine Motor and Manipulatives,* describes the different types of small muscle movement and coordination and how teachers can support the development of this coordination for different age children. The chapter describes how fine motor play is integrated throughout the curriculum with specific details on the importance of crossing midline and the use of scissor activities to develop cutting skills and pincer grasp. Suggestions for supporting each and every child's success address student diversity and activity ideas for parents to do at home are included in the chapter. All references have been updated.
- Chapter 12, *Large Motor and Outdoor Play*, explores how through large muscle and outdoor play children develop their eye–hand coordination, balance and coordination, large muscles skills, general health, a sense of freedom, an understanding of nature, creativity, social play skills, multisensory integration and learning, ability to explore and solve problems, and their imaginations. Different types of movement are defined and suggestions for equipment selection identified. Ideas are described for including motor development and physical fitness within activities

designed to target other curriculum areas such as music and art. New guidance on the crucial role of recess in school by The Council on School Health has been added as well as a new Brain Research feature that shows the relationship of physical fitness to better relational memory. A new video titled *2–5 Years: Gross Motor Development for Early Childhood* has been added to the MindTap digital platform. All references have been updated.

- Chapter 13, *Construction: Blocks and Woodworking,* describes well-planned block play and woodworking experiences where children create, build, construct, and stay engaged to facilitate children's development across domains in an engaging context. The unit block shapes and storage as well as the developmental stages of block play are visually represented to facilitate student understanding. A list of equipment and materials to use in woodworking is provided. The Brain Research feature discusses spatial reasoning and how to use technology in teaching construction play. New ideas for addressing diversity through block play and an additional activity plan for primary age children have been added in this edition. A new video titled *Preschool Stacking Activity* has been added to the MindTap digital platform. All references have been updated.
- Chapter 14, *Putting It All Together: Evaluation and Documentation,* examines the purpose, use, and process of evaluation including identifying standards for evaluation and ethical issues. The process used for creating a documentation plan is explored and methods for interpreting and using evaluation results are described. Types of evaluation including quantitative, qualitative, formative and summative evaluation are defined. Samples are provided to illustrate types of documentation used in evaluations. All references have been updated.

All chapters of the text are separate and complete, and at the same time connecting to other chapters to form curriculum as a whole for children from infancy to age eight. This allows each instructor to use the chapters in any sequence. This approach is helpful in meeting the individual needs of the teacher, the student, and ultimately the children.

New to This Edition

MindTap for *Early Education Curriculum: A Child's Connection to the World,* seventh edition, is a first-of-its kind digital solution with an integrated eportfolio that prepares teachers by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and competencies they must demonstrate to earn an education degree and state licensure, and to begin a successful career. Through activities based on real-life teaching situations, MindTap elevates students' thinking by giving them experiences in applying concepts, practicing skills, and evaluating decisions, guiding them to become reflective educators.

Updated and Revised Coverage

Early Education Curriculum takes an application-based approach that provides hands-on teaching tools, techniques, and tips for preschool and after-school programs through second grade. Building on the foundations of previous editions, the seventh edition has been thoroughly updated and revised:

- **Organization and Coverage:** The text has been updated, where needed, and the curriculum chapters (Part Two) continue to maintain a consistent chapter structure.
- **Case Studies:** Chapters 5 to 13 now have case studies to help apply the information in each chapter to different teaching setting situations. Each case study includes a "What Do You Think?" set of questions to get students to think critically about the case and what they would do in the classroom.
- **Brain Research:** Information on brain research related to the specific curriculum area appears throughout the textbook. While keeping seminal information about brain research that was in the sixth edition, the seventh edition includes new research:
  - Chapter 1 examines varying cultures roles in children's play.
  - Chapter 8 provides new research on the value of sensory experiences.
  - Chapter 9 research links young children's time in nature activities as having a large influence on the development of the child.
  - Chapter 10 describes the role of math activities on brain development.
  - Chapter 12 discusses the direct link between the level of child's physical fitness and memory.
  - Chapter 14 describes the Scientific Research-Based Intervention's (SPBI) system for evaluating data to assess progress toward learning goals.
- **Technology:** Each curriculum chapter contains a special section that focuses on the impact of technology related to the curriculum area discussed. This edition includes more information about the use of technology across the curriculum. Chapter 2 describes new technology in assessment that allows the teacher to better track a child's progress and to plan individualized instruction based on each child's needs and abilities. Chapter 3 identifies software that assists the teacher in lesson plan development and in the delivery of content throughout the curriculum.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:** The importance of culturally relevant curriculum appears throughout this edition and remains a continuing emphasis in the text. Chapters 5 to 13 each contain a section on how diversity impacts that chapter's specific subject

area. Teaching strategies for a diverse population are also included. New case studies also provide additional information on dealing with diversity in the classroom.

Chapter Pedagogy and Features

- **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):** Student learning outcomes have been updated to provide a clear road map of the major topics in each chapter and to allow for better assessment of student learning. SLOs have also been revised to focus on higher levels of thinking
- **National Standards:** National standards in literacy, mathematics, science, art, social studies, and music continue to appear at the beginning of each curriculum chapter as they relate to specific standards; they are also integrated before relevant chapter material as icons. Essential recommendations and position papers of the NAEYC and Association of Childhood Education International (ACEI) are included as well. In particular, NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct defines core values that are deeply rooted in the field of early childhood care and education. Also included are DEC Recommended Practices, Common Core State Standards, and InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards. The major standards (NAEYC, DAP, InTASC, and Head Start) have been compared to chapter content in a Correlation Chart located inside the covers. Additional standards more specific to a subject or group of students, such as DEC and ILA, are included in the chapters they relate to and in Appendix F.
- **Brain Research boxed feature:** This feature provides information about significant brain research targeted at the content of each chapter. New and updated research is found in Chapters 1, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 14.
- **Technology and Teaching boxed feature:** This feature discusses issues related to technology, including suggestions for the use of technology in the curriculum area discussed in the chapter. In some instances, it provides cautions related to its use. New information on using technology has been added to Chapters 2 and 3.
- **Appendix F** has been revised to include the standards that are specific to each chapter's content. Contact information for the Common Core and also contacts for the standards for states that have their own standards have also been included in Appendix F.
- **Videos:** TeachSource videos and questions have been moved to the MindTap digital learning platform under Activity 2 of the learning path.

More Features to Look For

Current and improved children's book lists—available as digital downloads in the Professional Resources section within MindTap—are included at the end of each curriculum chapter throughout the text. Expanded information is provided on themes, projects, webs, and developmentally appropriate activities. All of the features in this seventh edition are created to provide a resource of ideas, methods, suggested practices, and guidance goals that will give teachers and students guidelines to create and enrich their own curriculum.

Special Learning Features

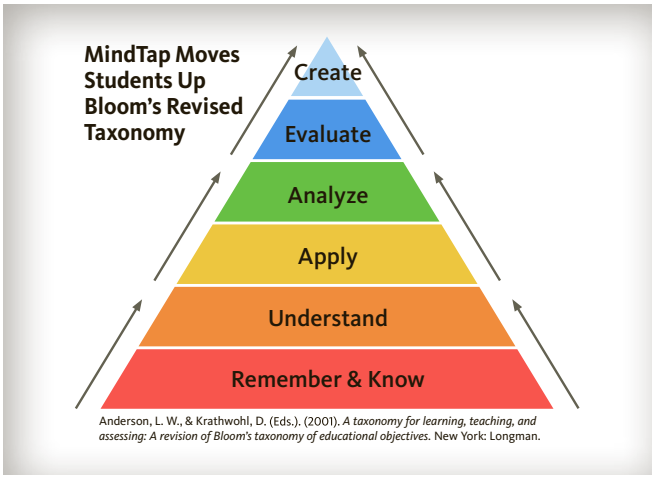
This book is designed to help students build knowledge with each chapter. Concepts are introduced in a specific chapter and then reviewed for elaboration and application throughout the text. Topics are approached developmentally and placed appropriately within the curriculum area where students can benefit from their content. Each topic becomes a part of the entire curriculum.

In addition to the new features discussed previously, numerous learning aids appear in the text to help student comprehension:

- **Key terms** are bolded and listed as a running glossary in the text margins so that students are able to identify them as they read the chapters.
- **Sectional icons** visually highlight concentrated coverage that relates to developmentally appropriate practice, NAEYC standards, Head Start standards, and InTASC teaching standards. Depending on the topic of a chapter, additional standards icons have been added, such as ILA for language and literacy and NSES for science.
- **Chapter organization** is formatted around the student learning outcomes for that chapter.
- **Observation, Assessment Strategies, and Evaluation** guidelines, forms and suggestions provide effective tools to be used throughout the early childhood curriculum. Guidelines and forms are available as digital downloads in the Professional Resources section within MindTap.
- **Learning Environment Checklists** provide center-based checklist to assist students as they complete observations in the children's classrooms. These are also available as digital downloads in the Professional Resources section within MindTap.
- **Activity Plan Worksheets** provide detailed plans with guidance tips and assessment strategies, and are included as digital downloads in the Professional Resources section within MindTap.
- **Lesson Plan samples** provide guidance in weekly planning for different age groups
- **Appendices** are designed to give teachers practical information that can be used across the curriculum. Appendix A, My Self, is an integrated curriculum theme with developmentally appropriate activities. Appendix B, Additional Activities and Songs, is new and includes additional activities that can be used in curriculum development. Appendix C, Songs and Poems, is also new and provides songs appropriate for curriculum topics. Another new Appendix, D, Forms,

provides a collection of forms that can be used to support classroom activities. Appendix E, Resources for Teachers, includes updated and new useful resources. Appendix F, Additional Standards by Chapter including Common Core State Contact Information, describes additional early childhood standards and their alignment with the text content. Common Core State standards contact information is also included. Appendix G, Professional Organizations, includes updated and new useful resources.

- **Standards Correlation Chart**: A correlation chart of NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation, DAP, InTASC, and Head Start is correlated to each chapter, and is included on the inside covers of this edition. The chart identifies how the content in this text aligns with these standards.



Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. (Eds.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives.* New York: Longman.

Ancillaries

The following ancillary materials are available to accompany the seventh edition of *Early Education Curriculum: A Child's Connection to the World.*

Instructor's Manual and Test Bank

An online Instructor's Manual accompanies this book. It contains information to assist the instructor in designing the course, including sample syllabi, discussion questions, teaching and learning activities, field experiences, learning objectives, and additional online resources. For assessment support, the updated test bank includes true/false, multiple-choice, matching, short-answer, and essay questions for each chapter.

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero

Cognero is a flexible, online system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content from multiple Cengage Learning solutions. Create multiple test versions in an instant and deliver them from your LMS, classroom, or wherever you want! No special installs or downloads needed. Create tests from school, home, the coffee shop—anywhere with Internet access.

MindTap™: The Personal Learning Experience

MindTap for *Early Education Curriculum: A Child's Connection to the Word* 7e, represents a new approach to teaching and learning. A highly personalized, fully customizable learning platform with an integrated eportfolio, MindTap helps students to elevate thinking by guiding them to:

- Know, remember, and understand concepts critical to becoming a great teacher.
- Apply concepts, create curriculum and tools, and demonstrate performance and competency in key areas in the course, including national and state education standards.
- Prepare artifacts for the portfolio and eventual state licensure, to launch a successful teaching career.
- Develop the habits to become a reflective practitioner.

As students move through each chapter's Learning Path, they engage in a scaffolded learning experience, designed to move them up Bloom's Taxonomy, from lower- to higher-order thinking skills. The Learning Path enables preservice students to develop these skills and gain confidence by:

- Engaging them with chapter topics and activating their prior knowledge by watching and answering questions about authentic videos of teachers teaching and children learning in real classrooms.
- Checking their comprehension and understanding through Did You Get It? assessments, with varied question types that are autograded for instant feedback.
- Applying concepts through mini-case scenarios—students analyze typical teaching and learning situations, and then create a reasoned response to the issue(s) presented in the scenario.
- Reflecting about and justifying the choices they made within the teaching scenario problem.

MindTap helps instructors facilitate better outcomes by evaluating how future teachers plan and teach lessons in ways that make content clear and help diverse students learn, assessing the effectiveness of their teaching practice, and adjusting teaching as needed. MindTap enables instructors to facilitate better outcomes:

- Making grades visible in real time through the Student Progress App so students and instructors always have access to current standings in the class.
- Using the Outcome Library to embed national education standards and align them to student learning activities, and also allowing instructors to add their state's standards or any other desired outcome.
- Allowing instructors to generate reports on students' performance with the click of a mouse against any standards or outcomes that are in their MindTap course.
- Giving instructors the ability to assess students on state standards or other local outcomes by editing existing or creating their own MindTap activities,

and then by aligning those activities to any state or other outcomes that the instructor has added to the MindTap Outcome Library.

MindTap for *Early Education Curriculum: A Child's Connection to the Word,* 7e, helps instructors easily set their course since it integrates into the existing Learning Management System and saves instructors time by allowing them to fully customize any aspect of the learning path. Instructors can change the order of the student learning activities, hide activities they don't want for the course, and—most importantly—create custom assessments and add any standards, outcomes, or content they do want (e.g., YouTube videos, Google docs). Learn more at www.cengage.com/mindtap.

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Special thanks go to our husbands and families for their support, patience, and encouragement.

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About the Authors

Nancy H. Beaver, M.Ed., has worked 40 years in Child Care and Early Childhood Education. She holds a B.S. in Education from the University of Texas, and a M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from University of North Texas. Currently, she is the program administrator of the Center for Child and Family Studies at Eastfield College, where she also teaches as an Adjunct Faculty in Child Development and Teacher Education. In addition, she teaches Early Childhood Education classes as an Adjunct Faculty for the University of North Texas at Dallas.

In her career, she has held a variety of early childhood roles from a consultant, providing training and technical assistance to Air Force Family Member Services program staff, to a Licensing Representative and Child Development Specialist for the state of Texas. She has also been the executive director of a nonprofit agency and has raised more than $5,000,000 for early childhood projects at nonprofit agencies and community colleges. She successfully led the Eastfield College Children's Laboratory School staff to earn NAEYC Accreditation in both 2008 and 2013. She worked on a faculty team to successfully earn NAEYC's Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (ECADA).

She has a long history of involvement with the Dallas Association for the Education for Young Children (DAEYC) as president and many other board offices, Texas AEYC as vice president and secretary of the board and NAEYC as Academy validator, commissioner, and assessor. She is most proud of two awards: TAEYC Trainer of the Year (2005) and DAEYC Pat Kennedy Teacher Educator of the Year (2006).

Nancy has also served as president of the Associate Degree Early Childhood Teacher Educators, better known as ACCESS, in 2013 and 2014.

She is married to her college sweetheart, Dom, and has one daughter, Stephanie.

Nancy Beaver, M.Ed.

Dr. Susan Skinner Wyatt brings more than 40 years of experience in the field of early care and education to this book. She holds a master's degree in Child Development and Family Living and a doctor of philosophy in Child Development with an emphasis on Adult Education and Educational Administration, both from Texas Woman's University.

Her experiences include director of a child-care center, child-care teacher, public school teacher from elementary through high school, community college professor, and author. She currently serves as the chair of the Child Development/Early Childhood Education and Teacher Education departments at Eastfield College in the Dallas, Texas, area.

Susan has served on the boards of the Dallas Association for the Education (past president and treasurer), Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (Treasurer), Dallas Association for Parent Education (president), and Child Development Educator's Association of the Texas Community College Teachers Association (past president and secretary).

Susan has received the Innovator of the Year for the Dallas County Community College District, Teacher Educator of the Year for the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, and the Piper Professor Award for Texas. She has served as a validator for the NAEYC Center-based Accreditation and is currently a peer reviewer for the NAEYC Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation.

Susan is married and the mother of three adult sons.

Welcome to the world of early education. We are glad you are here. Our profession needs caring, committed individuals to encourage and support children through their early years.

Dr. Susan Skinner Wyatt

Hilda L. Jackman brings to her authorship a background rich in experience and achievement as it relates to the education of young children. Long before she became professor emerita with the Dallas County Community College District and professor-coordinator of the Brookhaven Child Development/Early Childhood program, she pioneered children's television programming in the Dallas–Fort Worth area as a writer, producer, and puppeteer. She went on to earn a master of science degree in Early Childhood Education at the University of North Texas and for many years was a teacher of young children (infants through kindergarten) and director of several child development programs. During her 20 years at Brookhaven, besides writing curriculum and teaching, she helped establish the first certificate program in Texas to train nannies, developed multicultural/anti-bias curriculum courses, and consulted with business and industry on child care. Since retiring from college teaching, Hilda continues to act as a mentor, presents workshops and staff development seminars, consults, and stays active in professional organizations. She is also the author of *Sing Me a Story! Tell Me a Song! Creative Thematic Activities for Teachers of Young Children* (2005), also published by Cengage Learning.

Hilda is the proud mother of two adult sons and the very proud grandmother of twin granddaughters, shown with her in this photo.

To the Student

Each of you has a different reason for wanting to be in an early childhood classroom. Some of you are just beginning. Others are experienced teachers. No matter what type of program or what age group you work with, it is important that you understand the development of young children, help them connect with the changing world of their families, and promote developmentally appropriate practices in early education environments and curriculum.

This text is designed to be a practical guide to help you develop a curriculum appropriate for young children. By learning about theory, underlying research, and developmentally appropriate activities found in this text, you can develop your own curriculum.

Use the resources that accompany this text to get started creating curriculum webs. Write lesson and activity plans using the digital forms as well. We hope these resources will help you develop appropriate curriculum for young children. Your experiences with young children are most important to your academic and professional development. We encourage you to use this curriculum text to stimulate your own creativity and knowledge of children. Mix and match, add to, and redesign the ideas and activities presented. Take the time to enjoy the uniqueness of each individual child, as well as the group of children, as they explore and interact with the curriculum.

It is also important to remember that professional ethics and confidentiality are concerns that are inseparable from all observation, assessment, and participation activities. It is crucial that you deal with each child or adult without prejudice or partiality and refrain from imposing your own views or values upon children or adults.

We hope this text will prove helpful to you as you strive to make a difference in the lives of young children and their families. We are all in this profession together, and, like the children, we too are growing and developing.

— Nancy H. Beaver
— Susan Skinner Wyatt
— Hilda L. Jackman

Part 1

Preparing for Learning through Assessment, Curriculum, and the Environment

"I stand outside the classroom, teacher,
At the doorstep to the world.
I want to see it all,
To hear and feel and taste it all.
I stand here, teacher,
With eager eyes and heart and mind.
Will you open the door?"

Janet Galantay

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1 Starting the Process

Standards Covered in This Chapters

NAEYC 1a, 1b, 1c, 2b, 2c, 4b, 4c, 5c, 6b, 6d

DAP 2, 3, 5

INTASC 1, 2, 7, 8

HEAD START
Domain: Approaches to Learning,
Domain: Perceptual,
Motor and Physical Development

CEC DCC C12, C14, C15

Student Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Analyze the importance of historical information and theories to the field of early childhood education.
- Identify developmentally appropriate practices as they relate to child development and learning; individual strengths, interests, and needs; and social and cultural contexts.
- Discuss the importance of play in the lives of young children, describe the developmental stages of play, and identify ways teachers foster play.
- Explain the value of the techniques for communicating with families.

Please think of the children first. If you ever have anything to do with their entertainment, their food, their toys, their custody, their day or night care, their health care, their education—listen to the children, learn about them, learn from them. Think of the children first.

These words of Fred Rogers (2003) are meaningful to us as students and teachers. Children must be at the center of all we do. As adults who genuinely care about them, we should honor the uniqueness of each child and the child's family. Give them teachers with commitment, training, experience, and knowledge about child development and how children learn. "Children come into the world eager to learn. … There can be no question that the environment in which a child grows up has a powerful impact on how the child develops and what the child learns" (Bowman, Donovan, and Burns, 2000, p. 1).

Research is showing in early and elementary education that "all children can and will learn when educational communities are ready for them … This requires a commitment that makes explicit the responsibility of education professionals to broaden their repertoires and hone their skills to create classrooms in which all children maximize their potential" (New, Palsha, and Ritchie, 2009, p. 3).

As you read this chapter, its focus on making the environment and the curriculum child centered will be apparent. This chapter extends this philosophy by studying historical aspects of early education, learning and developmental theories, developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), social and cultural contexts, importance of play for young children, curriculum planning, early childhood schedules and routines, and communicating with parents. Also included are ideas to enhance instruction and activities that respect a child's culture, language, and learning style. Additionally, in-depth attention should be paid to language development, cognition, physical development, and social and emotional competence.

Early Childhood Education

> "The field of early care and education has changed profoundly in the last decade. In some ways, many long-time early childhood educators find it nearly unrecognizable. Standards and guidelines abound. Increasing numbers of early childhood programs are required to address state early learning standards (or guidelines) that will soon include three-year-olds and next, perhaps, even infants and toddlers (Freeman and Feeney, 2006, pp. 10–16)."

With this in mind, it is important to look back at our profession to see how changes produced new ways to help children and families. Historical information gives us an opportunity to see how past generations viewed children and their acquisition of knowledge, based on religious, ethnic, political, and economic pressures of the times. Almy (cited in Greenberg, 2000, pp. 6–10) believes that "it's most important not to leave behind everything we already know about children as we go on learning new things. … New knowledge should build on prior knowledge, not erase and replace it."

Exploring the storied history and philosophy of early childhood education presents us with significant individuals and far-reaching developments that have impacted and influenced our thinking. "The history of early childhood education is like a tapestry—woven of many influences. … The ingredients that early-childhood educators consider essential today—that care and education are inseparable, that teaching practices are developmentally appropriate, and that adequate funding is critical for success—all stem from historical events and people" (Gordon and Browne, 2011, p. 3).

The professional organizations mentioned in the timeline are all striving to improve the field of early childhood education. Their efforts emphasize the importance of advocacy, an attitude that encourages professionals, parents, and other caring adults to work together on behalf of young children.

Anyone who cares about children can be an advocate. Classroom teachers who work with school boards to change conditions for children and teachers are advocates. Caregivers who contact their elected officials to ask them to vote for child and family friendly policies are advocates. Professional associations who create opportunities to educate policy makers about problems that children face are advocates. Families that ban together to ask that the arts and music programs be returned to their school are advocates. Business leaders who form coalitions with early care and education caregivers are advocates. College students who support high educational standards so that they can be better teachers are advocates. Advocacy has many forms, and any person or group that is willing to stand on behalf of children is an advocate. (See Table 1-1.)

It is also essential for teachers to use every resource available to them, such as having membership in local, state, and national professional organizations. Attending meetings, workshops, and conferences offers opportunities for networking with other teachers. Reading professional journals keeps one up to date with current information as well. (See Appendix G for a comprehensive listing of professional organizations and their websites.)

Learning and Developmental Theories of Early Childhood Education

As we continue to consider the influences that have contributed to the field of early childhood education, it is beneficial to review the developmental theories that examine children's growth, behavior, and process of learning. A **theory** refers to a systematic statement of principles and beliefs created to explain a phenomenon or group of facts that have been repeatedly tested or are widely accepted. All curricula should be based on our beliefs about how children develop and learn. These beliefs guide how we see teaching and supporting children as learners.

Following are a few of the most influential theories and information about the individuals who developed them.

Psychosocial Theory

Erik Erikson (1902–1994) made significant contributions to psychoanalysis, personality theory, education practice, and social anthropology over five decades.

Erikson recognized growth and development to be continuous throughout an individual's life. His eight **psychosocial** stages describe the interaction between an individual's social-emotional condition and the interpersonal environment. His stages of development help us understand the importance of allowing children to play out their feelings in an environment of acceptance. The first four stages are relevant to early childhood educators:

1. **Basic trust versus mistrust (birth to one year)**. This developmental stage is important to an infant's learning that people can be depended on and that the child can depend on himself or herself. Love and acceptance are important for the child to learn that the world is a safe place in which to live. This foundation of trust will be developed if the infant's needs are met. This is observable when the infant babbles, coos, laughs, crawls, pulls up, and is comfortable with the environment.
2. **Autonomy versus shame and doubt (second year)**. This stage helps a child develop a basic sense of self-control and independence. The child is growing rapidly. It is significant during this stage that the toddler has opportunities to do things for himself or herself. This is observable when a toddler feeds and dresses himself or herself, and generally has an "I can do it myself" attitude that is accepted and reinforced by the adults in his or her life.

theory: A systematic statement of principles and beliefs created to explain a phenomenon or group of facts that have been repeatedly tested or are widely accepted.

psychosocial: Erikson's eight stages that describe the interaction between an individual's social-emotional condition and the interpersonal environment.

TABLE 1-1: Timeline of Early Education Historical Highlights

1000s Plato expressed the value of play.

1630s Locke emphasized importance of first-hand experiences as a means for learning. Children considered a blank page that could be molded by experience.

John Comenius, father of modern education, was first to recognize that play of childhood was learning and produced first children's picture book, *The World Illustrated.*

Jean-Jacques Roussueau proposed that children and adults think differently and children learn best through hands-on experiences.

1800s Johann Pestalozzi established the first school to teach preschool-age children.

1830s Froebel created the concept of kindergarten (children's garden) and Elizebeth Peabody organized first American Froebel union.

1840s Child Study movement created by G. Stanley Hall and Arnold Gesell.

1850s Nursery School for Children of Poor Women opened in cooperation with Children's Hospital of New York City.

1870s First public school kindergarten started in St. Louis.

1890s Hull House, a settlement house for immigrants, established a day nursery.

Piaget defined distinct stages of children's cognitive development.

1900s Patty Smith Hill created a curriculum that provided foundation for kindergartens in the United States, founded laboratory school at Columbia University Teacher's College as model for training early childhood educators and began a professional organization of early childhood educators.

Maria Montesorri opened Children's House in Rome.

1910s Nursery schools reflecting the principles of a child-centered approach were conceived and introduced in America by Margaret and Rachel McMillian (Gordon & Browne, 2001).

1920s At least one other adult living in home other than the parents. Nursery schools linked to child development and psychology and day nurseries focused on meeting the needs of poor and immigrant families were available (NAEYC, 2001).

1930s Depression produced economic and social crisis in the United States. Works Progress Administration (WPA) nurseries designed "to develop physical and mental well-being of preschool children in needy unemployed families or neglected or underprivileged homes resulting in almost 2,000 WPA nursery schools in operation by 1935"(NAEYC, 2001).

1940s Lanham Act allowed public funds to be used for child care while millions of women went to work for the World War II effort. Using Lanham Act funds, the Kaiser Shipyards opened child care centers that functioned 24 hours a day, year long and closed when the war ended (Gordon & Browne, 2011; NAEYC, 2001).

Reggio Emilia established in Italy influenced early childhood thinking around the world (Essa, 2011; Gordon & Browne, 2011).

B. F. Skinner proposed that children learn through experiences.

1960s High/Scope Perry Preschool Project began to serve at-risk children from impoverished neighborhoods. Based on landmark long-term study on the effects of high-quality early care and education on low-income 3- and 4-year-olds (Wiekart & Schweinhart, 2007).

National Committee on Nursery Schools (NANE) became National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and now includes a membership of over 100,000.

Landmark court decisions established responsibility of states to educate children.

Project Head Start, part of the Economic Opportunity Act's "War on Poverty," was funded to counteract the effects of poverty among children.

1970s National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) was created to provide and support programs, workshops, and resources for African-American children, their parents, and communities (NBCDI, 2002).

Child Development Associate (CDA) created as part of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (NAEYC, 2001).

Education for All Handicapped Children Act, now know as Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), passed to include early childhood services.

1980s National Association for Family Day Care established.

Position statements defining and describing developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving young children published by NAEYC (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009).

San Francisco became first large city to require developers to set aside funds for child care space.

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs established by NAEYC voluntary accreditation of center based programs.

CDA Credentialing administered by NAEYC moved to Council for Professional Recognition (NAEYC, 2001).

U.S. Department of Education established Even Start, a parent education/literacy program.

1990s Association of Childhood Education International (ACEI) celebrated its centennial and is the oldest professional association of its type in the United States (ACEI, 2002).

National Association for Family Day care changes to the National Association of Family Child Care with a goal of providing assistance for developing leadership, professionalism, and quality for family child care providers (NAFCC, 2002).

T.E.A.C.H.Scholarship program enacted.

The Stand for Children Campaign begins.

2000s No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 placed more emphasis on program accountability and assessment in grades 3–8) (Essa, 2011; United States Department of Education, 2001).

Campaign launched to avoid SIDS in child care settings.

Operation Military Child Care started to address the child care needs of parents who were activated and deployed.

2010s President Obama called on Congress to expand access to high-quality preschool for every child in America through the Preschool for all initiative.

Every Student Succeeds Act replaces No Child Left Behind Act allowing states more control related to alternatives to high-stakes testing.

3. **Initiative versus guilt (3 to 5 years)**. During this stage of life, children are becoming interested in exploring and are ready to learn. Children need to express their natural curiosity and creativity through opportunities in the environment. This stage of development is observable by watching how children demonstrate body control and motor skills while riding a tricycle and running. Initiative is reinforced when children are given freedom to engage in fantasy and other dramatic play activities. Social roles in dramatic play continue to show children identifying with adult roles. They enjoy making adult situations conform to their notion of the ways things are. Roles can be reversed and new roles can be tried out.
4. **Industry versus inferiority (6 to 11 years)**. At this stage of life, the child is ready for challenges of new and exciting ideas. The child needs opportunities for accomplishment in physical, intellectual, and social development. This is observable by watching older children during creative dramatics activities. They improvise their own dialogue, play the scenes, and evaluate the results. This is informal and demonstrates individual and group imagination, problem solving, critical thinking, and cooperation with others.

The last four of Erikson's (1963) psychosocial stages follow the individual from the teenage years through the rest of the life span:

5. *Identity versus role diffusion (12 to 18 years).*
6. *Intimacy versus isolation (young adulthood).*
7. *Generative versus stagnation (adult middle years).*
8. *Ego integrity versus despair (older years).*

> "Erik Erikson's work and wisdom have profoundly shaped the field of child development. What comes through most strongly in Erikson's work is his empathy and respect for children—and for their parents and the societies in which they live. . . . Erikson's work has more than withstood the test of time; it continues to inform and inspire the fields of child development, life-span studies, anthropology, history, sociology, and others (Stott, 1994, p. 43)."

cognitive development: The mental process that focuses on how children's intelligence, thinking abilities, and language acquisition emerge through distinct ages. Piaget's study of children's thinking, involving creating their own mental images of the world, based on encounters with the environment.

learning: Change in behavior or cognition that occurs as children construct knowledge through active exploration and discovery in their physical and social environments.

assimilation: Piaget's process of cognitive development, which occurs when a child handles, sees, or otherwise experiences something.

schema: An integrated way of thinking or of forming mental images.

accommodation: Piaget's theory of modification of existing cognitive information. Cognitive schemes are changed to accommodate new experiences or information.

equilibrium: A balance of one's cognitive schemes and information gathered from the environment; assimilation and accommodation.

Cognitive Development Theory

Cognitive development is described as the intellectual acquisition of information, facts, or data and includes reasoning, understanding, problem solving, and language acquisition. Much of what is known about cognitive development has come from the work of *Jean Piaget* (1896–1980). He introduced the study of children's thinking and was the first to describe how each child creates his own mental image of the world, based on his encounters with the environment. Piaget describes the system of thought that develops through common stages of all cultures goes through all children.

A careful consideration of Piaget's concepts, along with close observation of children, helps teachers provide appropriate environments and experiences. Piaget believed that **learning**, or change in behavior, occurs as children construct knowledge through active exploration and discovery in their physical and social environments. He also asserted that learning happens through the dual process of assimilation and accommodation.

Assimilation is a process that occurs when a child handles, sees, or otherwise experiences something, see **Figure 1-1**. He or she adds this information to existing schemata.

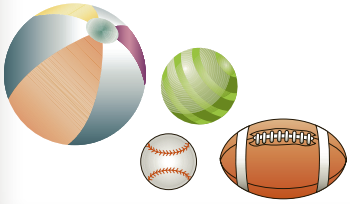
A **schema** (plural, *schemata*) is an integrated way of thinking or of forming mental images. "We constantly create, refine, change, modify, organize, and reorganize our schemata" (Essa, 2013, p. 116).

Accommodation occurs when a schema is modified as a result of experience. (See **Figure 1-2**.)

Equilibrium happens when there is a balance between assimilation and accommodation. According to Piaget, this continues until new information causes the process to begin again (Piaget, 1926).

A child has a concept for “ball” that fits all the balls the child has seen so far.

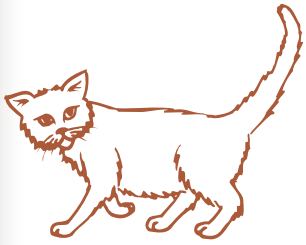
This child sees a football for the first time.



The football matches the “ball” concept, so the child adds it to the concept of ball.

Figure 1-1 Example of Piaget’s concept of assimilation.

A child has a concept for “dog” that includes all animals with four legs.



This child sees a cat for the first time and calls it a “dog.” When the child realizes the cat does not fit “dog,” he may create a new category for “cat.”

As the child matures, the process of accommodation will enable him to create a super-concept, or a broader category, which would include both the cat and the dog—such as “animal.”

Figure 1-2 Example of Piaget’s concept of accommodation.

Piaget divided cognitive development into four stages:

1. **Sensorimotor stage (birth to about 2 years)**. During this time, children grow from helpless newborns to children who are able to walk and talk. Infants begin learning through the use of their sensory system and reflexes. Gradually, these reflex behaviors are changed and new behaviors develop. Babies enjoy repeating behaviors. Often, something unexpected happens during repetitions and a new behavior is discovered. They then try to repeat the new behavior. Throughout the sensorimotor stage, infants are developing the concept of **object permanence**. According to Piaget's theory, a baby thinks that objects, including people, cease to exist the moment he or she stops seeing them. For example, if an object that has left returns, the infant considers it a new, though identical, object. As he or she develops, however, he or she begins to search for the missing object or person.
2. **Preoperational stage (about 2 to 7 years)**. Piaget believed that children's thinking during this stage is **egocentric**—that is, they think about the world only in relation to themselves. Along with this, the preoperational period is characterized by **symbolic thinking**. Symbols or mental representations are formed, allowing children to solve problems by thinking before acting. They begin to enjoy pretend play. As thinking emerges as verbal expression, language acquisition proceeds rapidly. Intellectual and language development blend together. The more a child uses all the senses and broadens his or her experiences, the more he or she has to think and talk about.
3. **Concrete operations stage (about 7 to 12 years)**. During this stage, children are developing concepts of numbers, relationships, and processes, as well as thinking problems through mentally. Logical thought requires actual physical objects or events. Piaget explains:

> "Manipulation of materials is crucial. In order to think, children in the concrete stage need to have objects in front of them that are easy to handle, or else be able to visualize objects that have been handled and that are easily imagined without any real effort."

> "Children learn through the use of materials. They should be selected based on their ability to allow the child to become conscious of a problem and seek ways he/she can solve the problem. If the child generalizes too broadly, the teacher should provide additional materials to allow the child to refine his/her solution."

4. **Formal operations stage (12 years through adulthood)**. The individual reasons logically and moves from concrete manipulations to abstract thinking. The ability to hypothesize and think about what might be rather than what is usually occurs during this stage.

Each of these stages involves a period of formation and a period of attainment. Each builds on the development of the preceding stage. Teachers and parents should provide appropriate environments and ask appropriate questions, moving from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract.

For exploration of other Piagetian concepts, see the section on play in this chapter and Chapter 10, "Math."

object permanence: A mature state of perceptual development. According to Piaget's theory, a baby thinks that objects, including people, cease to exist the moment he or she stops seeing them. An older child starts to search for the missing object or person.

egocentric: A stage when individuals think about the world only in relation to themselves.

symbolic thinking: The formation of symbols or mental representations, allowing children to solve problems by thinking before acting.

Sociocultural Theory

Over the past two decades, the educational theories of Russian developmental psychologist *Lev Vygotsky* (1896–1934) have been translated and made available in the United States. Vygotsky asserted that a child's learning development is affected by his culture, including the culture of family environment. He focused on the whole child and incorporated ideas of culture and values into child development, particularly the development of language and self-identity. "Because Vygotsky regarded language as a critical bridge between the sociocultural world and individual mental functioning, he viewed the acquisition of language as the most significant milestone in children's cognitive development" (Berk and Winsler, 1995, p. 20). It is from language that the child constructs reality.

Much of what a child learns comes from the culture around him. In addition, interactions with teachers, parents, and more experienced peers contribute significantly to a child's intellectual development. Vygotsky believed that a difference exists between what a child can do on his own and what he can do with help. Vygotsky called this difference the **zone of proximal development**. In other words, the "zone" is the range of potential each child has for learning, with that learning being shaped by the social environment in which it takes place. This potential ability is greater than the actual ability of the individual when the learning is facilitated by someone with greater expertise (Wertsch, 1991).

Vygotsky felt that children develop lower mental functions such as associative learning, simple perceptions, and involuntary attention through social interactions with people who possess more knowledge. Higher mental functions will eventually develop including problem-solving, moral reasoning, language, memory schemas, and logic.

For teachers of young children, the zone of proximal development may be used to provide a theoretical base from which to understand cooperative learning. In the culture of the classroom, this can translate into small-group instruction in which students work together to solve problems. This approach encourages children to construct their own knowledge while engaging in activities that build and rebuild, or construct, ideas based on previous experiences. In addition, the role of the teacher includes both designing an educative environment and collaborating with children by scaffolding their efforts to master new skills. Vygotsky-based teaching is activity-centered and encourages teacher to create opportunities for children to engage in culturally meaningful opportunities with the teacher's guidance. This kind of teaching emphasizes **scaffolding**, which occurs as the teacher (adult) continually adjusts the level of help offered in response to the child's level of performance. Scaffolding can help instill the skills necessary for independent problem solving in the future, and teachers must become experts in this experience. To do that, teachers must effectively utilize observation skills to learn each and every child's level of learning. Only then can they make a determination of the steps to take to meet each child's unique needs.

For exploration of another major Vygotskian concept, see the section on play in this chapter.

Multiple Intelligences Theory

Howard Gardner (1943–), a psychologist and professor at Harvard Graduate School of Education, is also a researcher who has studied the mind and brain with particular reference to learning and education. He has challenged the view that something called "intelligence" can be objectively measured and reduced to a single number or "IQ" score. In fact, Gardner's definition of intelligence is multifaceted. His ongoing research, Project Zero, at Harvard suggests that an individual is not born with all of the intelligence he or she will ever have. Rather, intelligence can be learned and improved on throughout a lifetime.

Gardner identifies his cross-cultural exploration of the ways individuals are intelligent as **multiple intelligences**. His philosophy also proposes that one form of intelligence is not better than another; all are equally valuable and viable. Gardner's theory also suggests that teachers should take seriously the child's individual differences. An understanding of each child's intelligence is critical in the development of curriculum to prepare children to learn in new situations.

The following explanations of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences are adapted from Gardner (1997), Hine (1996), and Nicholson-Nelson (1999):

1. **Verbal-linguistic intelligence:** From the babbling of infancy to the toddler's simple sentences, the ability to use language and words continues to grow throughout early childhood. Whether written or spoken, it develops with sensitivity to the order and rhythm of words. The learning environment should include a language- and print-rich classroom with opportunities for reading, writing, speaking, and creative writing. Children who are accomplished in verbal-linguistic abilities enjoy reading, writing, telling stories, playing word games, and communicating effectively.

zone of proximal development: The range of potential each child has for learning, with that learning being shaped by the social environment in which it takes place.

scaffolding: The adjustable support the teacher offers in response to the child's level of performance.

multiple intelligences: Gardner's theory, which proposes that one form of intelligence is not better than another; all nine are equally valuable and viable.

2. **Logical-mathematical intelligence:** Starting with babies inspecting their world and continuing on to toddlers recognizing similar characteristics of objects, the ability to categorize and to use numbers, patterns, sequencing, and cause and effect to solve problems develops and grows throughout early childhood. The learning environment should offer opportunities to relate math and science to real-life situations while providing activities that make math and problem solving fun, relevant, and challenging. Children who are adept in logical-mathematical abilities learn through asking questions in a logical manner, making connections between pieces of information, exploring, and developing strong problem-solving and reasoning skills.
3. **Musical-rhythmic intelligence:** Starting with the prenatal awareness of noises and rhythms and, later, imitations of sounds and pitches, a child soon develops the ability to produce and recognize simple and then complex songs and to perceive pitch, tone, and rhythmic pattern. He becomes immersed in the music and sounds of the world. The learning environment should provide opportunities for singing, listening, movement activities, sound awareness, and musical instrument appreciation and practice, while emphasizing cultural awareness through music. Children who are strong in musical-rhythmic abilities think in rhythms and melodies; enjoy listening to music, singing, dancing, humming, and playing musical instruments; and exhibit a sensitivity to environmental sounds.
4. **Visual-spatial intelligence:** From the infant's ability to discriminate among the faces around him or her to the toddler's first steps, the facility to perceive the visual world with a great deal of understanding continues throughout early childhood. Creating visual images with shape, color, and form opens up new understanding. The learning environment should be a graphic-rich classroom that encourages opportunities for visual processing as well as thinking and planning in three dimensions. Children who are highly capable in visual-spatial abilities think in images and pictures; like to draw, design, and create things; and often see things from different points of view. (See **Figure 1-3**.)

Figure 1-3 Creating visual images with shape, color, and form opens up new understanding for young children.

5. **Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence:** From an infant's looking for and grasping different objects to the strength and coordination of an older child, the ability to use the body for self-expression develops through information gained from muscles, sensations, reflexes, coordination, and movement. The learning environment should reflect opportunities for physical challenges throughout the day, not just outdoors but indoors as well. The classroom should facilitate tactile experiences and the use of manipulatives in math, science, and language arts. Children who are resourceful in bodily-kinesthetic abilities learn through moving, doing, and touching. They enjoy physical activities, such as those involving hand-eye coordination and hands-on experiments.
6. **Interpersonal intelligence:** From an infant's bonding with parents to the meaningful relationships with others outside the family, the ability to understand other people and their actions, moods, and feelings develops as young children deal with person-to-person relationships and communication. The learning environment should provide opportunities for children to relate to others by cooperatively participating, sharing, negotiating, and communicating in groups or with individuals. Children who show interpersonal abilities learn through listening, cooperating in shared projects, demonstrating leadership skills, seeing things from other perspectives, and organizing and negotiating group activities.
7. **Intrapersonal intelligence:** Starting with a baby's realization that he or she is a separate person from the mother, the child's ability to understand himself or herself grows throughout early childhood and at the same time helps in the identification of feelings, moods, strengths, and weaknesses. The learning environment provides plenty of space and time for self-reflection and working alone in a safe environment that encourages appropriate risk taking. Children who are accomplished in intrapersonal abilities learn through understanding their role in relationship to others, have a strong sense of self, and enjoy setting goals, planning, and working on self-paced projects, all of which involve having choices.
8. **Naturalist intelligence:** A child's interest in seeing, smelling, and touching a flower, reacting to the sound of a bird, or playing with the family pet demonstrates his or her ability to recognize important distinctions in the natural world. The learning environment should offer opportunities for exploring outdoors and bringing the outdoors inside by providing field trips, books, visuals, objects, and materials relating to the natural world. Children who show naturalist abilities learn through observing nature, being sensitive to all features of the natural world, and enjoying books, visuals, and objects related to the world around them. (See **Figure 1-4**.)
9. **Existential:** This ninth intelligence can be defined as the ability to be sensitive to, or have the capacity for, conceptualizing or tackling deeper or larger questions about human existence, such as the meaning of life, why are we born, why do we die, what is consciousness, or how did we get here. Children pose, and sometimes even answer, life's larger questions. Like: Why am I here? Why are we here? Can animals understand us, or do animals go to heaven? Where do we go when we die? These may be those children who can be described as "fully aware" of the cosmos—of its diversity, complexity, and wonder. Frequently, these are the children who persist in asking those "big" questions that adults cannot answer.

Figure 1-4 A child's interest in seeing, smelling, and touching a flower demonstrates the ability to recognize important distinctions in the natural world.

The Multiple Intelligences theory is a useful model for developing a systematic approach to nurturing and teaching children and honoring their individual needs and strengths within a classroom setting.

The concept of multiple intelligences does not require discarding previous ideas. Teachers can supplement current appropriate activities with new ideas that will reach even more of their students. In fact, Gardner contends that teachers need to guide students into

Reflect On This

Some teachers think that to be fair, you have to teach all children the same. What do you think?

using their combination of intelligences to help them learn whatever they want to learn, as well as what teachers and society believe they have to learn.

The multiple intelligences approach provides a framework for us to identify how children learn to build on their strongest assets, to help them become more intelligent by exposing them to a variety of ways of learning, to better individualize for their interests and needs, and to use teaching strategies that make learning more appropriate, successful, and enjoyable for all children. Examples of using Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory in the classroom can be found in the curriculum content chapters of this book. For further application of this and other theories, see the curriculum models and programs in Chapter 3.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), introduced more than 20 years ago by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), defines and describes what is developmentally appropriate for young children in childhood programs serving children and families, birth through age eight. NAEYC's current position statement "reflects both continuity and change in the early childhood field. . . . DAP requires both meeting children where they are—which means that teachers must get to know them well—and enabling them to reach goals that are both challenging and achievable" (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009, p. xii).

Developmentally appropriate early education recognizes the social nature of learning, and it values cultural and linguistic diversity. Also included is the understanding that children need an environment that allows them to interact at their own level of development with a minimum amount of adult direction. (See **Figure 1-5**.) A strong emphasis is placed

developmentally appropriate practice: The curriculum planning philosophy expressed by NAEYC defines and describes what is developmentally appropriate for young children in childhood programs serving children and families, birth through age eight.

Figure 1-5 In a developmentally appropriate environment, teachers develop relationships with children that are consistent and supportive.

Brain Research: Brain Development

According to recent brain research, we now understand that shortly after conception, the unborn child hears its mother's voice. The brain is already linking the circuits necessary to understand and reproduce language. There are "windows of opportunity" or critical periods in a young child's life when he or she can most easily acquire a new language. The language processing brain cells are being wired and are especially responsive to experiences. By the age of three, children's brains are twice as active as their parents.

Fleming (2002, www.nncc.org/release/brain.language.html) explains, "Each child has more than 50,000 nerve pathways that can carry sounds of the human voice from the ears to the brain. The brain encodes the words and actually rearranges its brain cells into connections or networks to produce language." Therefore, infants and toddlers need experiences with caring adults "who offer many one-on-one, face to face interactions with them to support their oral language development and lay the foundation for later literacy learning" (Neuman, Copple, and Bredekamp, 2000, p. 11).

Tomlinson (cited in Copple and Bredekamp, 2009, p. 200) adds, "The first five to seven years of life are a sensitive period for brain development. . . . The brain is more malleable than it will be later, making kindergarten an optimum time for learning and effective intervention with all children." Changes in the brain structure process are important because they influence how children interact with both people and with the environment.

Dr. Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., is an internationally recognized authority on brain development and children in crisis. He is concerned about societal changes that may be impacting children's brain development.

> "Our modern world is very different than the world that our brain is engineered for. In the world that human beings have lived in for centuries, there were many, many, many more people in our lives—aunties, grannies, extended family. We were in continuous relational interaction with each other. . . . The developing child under the age of 6 had at least, in those typical settings, four developmentally mature individuals who would help protect, enrich and nurture these kids (pp. 47–49)."

Thanks to the loving attention of many family members, Dr. Perry says, the part of the brain involved in relational interaction got lots of stimulation. This helped people grow up with a tremendous sense of empathy.

Dr. Perry's concerns point to the critical role that early childhood teachers play in supporting children's healthy brain development.

on children learning to think critically, work together cooperatively, and solve problems. Because developmentally appropriate classrooms are not only age and stage appropriate but also individually appropriate, they will not all look alike. To enhance the quality of educational experiences for young children, DAP is a framework for continuing to meet the diverse needs of all the children in our care. Kostelnik, Soderman, and Whirin (2014, p. 17) explain weaving the strands of age appropriateness, individual appropriateness, and sociocultural appropriateness into a cohesive philosophy requires deliberate effort and continuous reflections by early childhood practioners. Throughout this book, developmentally appropriate practice will be discussed in relation to chapter content.

Child Development and Learning

First, let us focus on what is developmentally occurring with young children, the variations in their development, and their developmental process for learning. **Development**, in relationship to early childhood education, can be defined as systematic and adaptive changes in the body and mind based on sequence and patterns of growth and maturity (Charlesworth, 2013; Swim and Watson 2013). "Developmental trends occur in a similar fashion for all children. This does not, however, imply uniformity. On the contrary, individual differences due to genetic and experiential variations and differing cultural and social contexts have strong influences on development" (Bowman, Donovan, and Burns, 2000, p. 5).

As we think about development and learning, it is important to remember that the areas of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth may overlap, even as age groups may. "Children's development and learning in one domain influence and are influenced by what takes place in other domains" (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009, p. 11).

development: Systematic and adaptive changes in the body and mind.

Infants

The early months of infancy are crucial in creating a foundation for all areas of development. Infants are actively involved with their world. They explore with all their senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling) and are acutely aware of their environment. Infants and the significant adults in their lives establish special relationships that involve getting to know each other and adjusting to each other. What adults do can modify how infants behave (Swim and Watson, 2014).

Infants learn about their surroundings by physically moving around, through sensory exploration, and by social interaction. (See **Figure 1-6**.) Gallagher (2005, p. 12) continues this thought, "A typically developing child needs frequent opportunities for movement and interactions with people and objects. Fixed pieces of equipment such as playpens, high chairs, and bouncy seats provide little opportunities for varied and active experiences." As they are learning, the sight of the adult who feeds, holds, and comforts the infant is reinforced when that adult shows pleasure in caring for the infant. Emotional attachment develops as the child learns to expect that special person to make him or her feel good. The infant then seeks more contact with that adult. Even after crawling and walking have begun, the child frequently asks to be held. Honig (2002, p. xi) explains further, "Research and clinical findings over the past decades confirm the connection to later emotional well-being of a secure attachment between each baby or young child and a warm, stable adult."

As teachers of the youngest children, we have a significant responsibility to the infants in our care. "Like dancers, the infant care teacher and infant synchronize their interactions, each responding to and influencing the other. The challenge is doing this with three, four, or five infants at once" (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009, p. 56).

As families and infants enter child care, it is most important that a solid relationship is built between each of them and the teachers. "Infant care teachers need to observe and learn from the experiences, knowledge, culture, and childrearing beliefs of family members" (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009). Daily communication between teachers and families is crucial. It fosters involvement and support and offers a culturally sensitive approach to dealing with caregiver/family member conflicts.

Decades of research by neuroscientists and others have found what we in early childhood education have been saying for years, namely, that a child's foundation for behavior

Figure 1-6 Infants are actively involved with their world.

and learning for the rest of his or her life is laid in the early years. The better the child's early nurturing, the better are his prospects for future development (Gabbard and Rodrigues, 2002).

Although it has been known for many years that most of a child's brain cells are formed in the prenatal stage, the brain is not completely developed at birth. Research indicates that important neural (nerve) connections, transferring information from one part of the body to another, occur and strengthen after birth. Formations of the connections depend on the relationships and experiences we are exposed to in our environments. Research continues to refine scientists' insight into brain development, such as "understanding of developmental periods of dramatic brain growth, information about regions of brain growth, and details on brain functions. We know that the brain has growth spurts during certain times of development, such as early childhood and adolescence" (Schore, cited in Gallagher, 2005, pp. 12–20). By using new research techniques, scientists are discovering that babies are aware of the world around them—more so than adults.

An important aspect of a young child's continued mental development is **self-regulation**, his or her growing natural ability to exercise control over physical and emotional needs in the face of changing circumstances. Self-regulation is visible in all areas of behavior and is the foundation of early childhood development. For example, by using consistent routines with infants, you are helping young children learn to self-regulate within the structure of a nurturing environment.

All of this, along with new and continuing exploration of brain function, from birth through the first 10 years of life, helps us understand more about the relationship between *nature* and *nurture*. The interplay between nurture (the nutrition, surroundings, care, stimulation, and teaching that are provided or withheld) and nature (an individual's genetic endowment) determines how humans develop and learn.

Figure 1-7 This is a time for rapid development as a toddler learns self-help skills.

Toddlers

Children aged 16 to 36 months grow and learn rapidly. (See **Figure 1**-7.) "The toddler is a dynamo full of unlimited energy, enthusiasm, and curiosity. . . . The toddler begins this period with the limited abilities of an infant and ends with the relatively sophisticated skills of a young child" (Allen and Marotz, 2010, p. 111). This is a time for development in mobility, autonomy, and **self-help skills**, the child learning what can be done for himself or herself by his or her own effort or ability, such as washing and drying hands, and feeding or dressing himself or herself. "Perhaps one of the best ways to nurture good feelings about self is to encourage toddlers' already strong interest in doing things for themselves" (Gestwicki, 2014). They try many tasks that are often too difficult for them. At this time, the safety of the environment is critical. As a teacher, you should expect this newfound independence and allow for trial and error. Children love to repeat and use these new skills over and over again.

Toddlers are fascinated by words. As these active children become more independent, "their speech is limited, but their understanding of communication is beyond their speech. . . . Toddlers learn a great deal through imitation and especially from observing demonstrations accompanied by a verbal explanation" (Charlesworth, 2011). Chapter 5 emphasizes language and literacy development.

> "Young toddlers are busy exploring the world from their new, upright vantage point. . . . Once toddlers master walking, their motor skills grow by leaps and bounds. They learn to jump, tiptoe, march, throw and kick a ball, and make a riding toy go by pushing with their feet or perhaps even by pedaling (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009)."

Appropriate teaching techniques require the building of trust between the children and the teacher and between the children and their environment. This can develop only if there are safe, consistent, and child-centered surroundings that encourage success for both children and teachers. There is more information on developmentally appropriate learning environments in Chapter 4.

self-regulation: A child's natural ability to exercise control over physical and emotional behavior in the face of changing circumstances.

self-help skills: In early childhood, a child's ability to care for himself or herself, such as dressing, feeding, and toileting.

Figure 1-8 Young children are full of enthusiasm and high energy.

Three- and Four-Year-Olds

The preschool years are special. "Now the preschool year or years before kindergarten are recognized as a vitally important period of learning and development in their own right, not merely as a time for growth in anticipation of the 'real learning' that will begin in school" (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009, p. 111). Three-year-olds have a distinct period of development with added skills and challenges. They are anxious to try new things but get frustrated when they cannot do what they set out to do. With an enlarged vocabulary, they engage in more extensive conversations; and although they can play along with other children, they often find it difficult to cooperate in a game. The 3-year-old enjoys fantasy and imaginative play, although the difference between fantasy and reality is not always clear.

Generally, the child's interest has become more sustained, but repetition is still important. He or she begins to enjoy looking at picture and storybooks and has a better understanding of verbal cues. There is a continued need for exploration and experimentation. Teachers of 3-year-olds need to respect their growing skills and competencies without forgetting just how recently they were acquired.

Four-year-olds are full of enthusiasm and high energy. (See **Figure 1-8**.) The ability to do more things without help, along with increased large and small muscle control, allows the children to develop a greater self-confidence. Children of this age enjoy learning to do new things and like to have an adult's attention. At the same time, because they are so eager to learn and learn so fast, they can use a higher level of language (more and bigger words) than they really understand.

The 4-year-old has broader and more diverse interests. He or she begins to understand the environment and benefits from field trips. His or her interest in others prompts him to ask searching questions about people and their relationships with others. He or she is interested in the letter carrier, the firefighter, the police officer, and everyone around him or her who performs various services.

The child is conscious of make-believe and begins to "be" other people or animals. He gradually builds a background for imaginative play. For fours, play is most often seen as a solitary activity. Even so, peers are becoming even more important to the fours. As a teacher, when you interact with these active children, you will be bombarded with questions. Sometimes they will insist on trying to do things that are too difficult for them. Help them find many things that they can do. Observe the children and set up the environment to match their skills. More information on play is provided later in this chapter.

Prekindergarten programs that support effective teaching practices and opportunities for 4-year-olds are available in approximately 40 states. Many school buildings have been created specifically for eligible preschoolers, which fills an expanding need for low-income children with disabilities (National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), 2015).

> "Teachers are encouraged to take a developmental perspective in implementing the Prekindergarten Guidelines. Teachers should "meet children where they are" and provide information and activities at a level that children can readily understand and engage with. This will mean building children's skills over time, working toward the school readiness outcomes step by step as children demonstrate mastery of beginning level skills. Teachers should have the outcome skills in mind, but will need to prepare children to meet these goals through scaffolding experiences and activities that are appropriate for individual children's current developmental levels and capabilities (University of Texas System and Texas Education Agency, 2008, p. 28)."

Five-Year-Olds

Five-year-olds are becoming more social; they have best friends and also enjoy playing with small groups of children. Their use of language, especially vocabulary, continues to grow

along with the understanding that words can have several meanings. Experimentation with language is evident at this age.

Fives are more self-controlled, but family and teacher have the most influence on how they behave. They take responsibility seriously and can accept suggestions and initiate action. With the increase of large and small muscle abilities, 5-year-olds can run, jump, catch, throw, and use scissors, crayons, and markers easily. (See **Figure 1-9**.)

Exploration of the environment is important to these children. They are learning about the world and their place in it. They act on their own and construct their own meaning. Each of their actions and interpretations is unique to them. They are developing an understanding of rules, limits, and cause and effect.

"Kindergarten children are undergoing profound transformations—in their capacity to think rationally, persist in the face of challenge, use language, adeptly suppress impulse, regulate emotion, respond sympathetically to others' distress, and cooperate with peers" (Berk, cited in Gullo, 2006, KToday—Teaching and Learning in the Kindergarten Year, NAEYC). Children of this age also believe in their own abilities to master new skills.

The number of children attending child care and preschool programs continues to grow. Standards, guidelines, and academic demands continue to increase as well. These factors have transformed the role of kindergarten. Approximately 95 percent of children kindergarten age in the United States are enrolled in some type of kindergarten program. Kindergarten is now generally considered the first year of school (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009). The teacher's role is to create the appropriate environment, encourage curiosity, and learn along with the children. Kindergarten has to be a place for *every* child to grow and learn, in every dimension of development (Gullo, 2006).

Figure 1-9 Young children playing outside can practice their newly discovered physical skills in a safe environment.

Six-, Seven-, and Eight-Year-Olds

"The early grades are a time for children to shine. They gain increasing mastery in every area of their development and learning. They explore, read, and reason, problem solve, communicate through conversations and writing, and develop lasting friendships" (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009, p. 257). The body growth of 6- to 8-year-olds is slower but steadier, and physical strength and ability are important to them. Their motor coordination begins to improve, and playing games that require eye-hand coordination, such as baseball, becomes easier at this age. These children are able to think and learn in more complicated ways, both logically and systematically. They are developing the ability to concentrate their attention for longer periods of time.

The language and communication development in these primary-grade children is dramatic. They move from oral self-expression to written self-expression. They are becoming more independent and have strong feelings about what they eat, wear, and do. The six to eights are extremely curious about their world, and they actively look for new things to do, see, and explore. They are making new friends, and these peers play a significant role in their lives as they take into consideration the viewpoints and needs of others. "In order to make friends, certain skills are necessary: The ability to understand that others have different points of view, the ability to recognize that others have separate identities, and the ability to understand that each encounter is part of a relationship" (Click and Parker, 2009, p. 107).

They are becoming more empathetic by developing the ability to see things from another perspective. They are also very sensitive and their feelings get hurt easily. As these primary-age children try out their new independence, they need teachers' and parents' guidance, affection, encouragement, and protection as much as, if not more than, ever.

Including families in the program will encourage their support and provide you more insight into their children. Communication with family members is discussed throughout this book. Suggestions on how teachers can work in partnership with families and communities are discussed later in this chapter.

Diversity: Cultural, Linguistic, and Ability Differences

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Individual Strengths, Interests, and Needs

Now let us examine individual appropriateness, which involves adapting an early childhood environment to meet a child's cultural and linguistic needs, as well as his or her individual strengths and interests. This includes providing each child with the time, opportunities, and resources to achieve individual goals of early education. The teacher should support a positive sense of self-identity in each child. It is important for a teacher to provide many opportunities for teacher-child interaction. However, individual appropriateness should not result in the lowering of expectations.

Individual appropriateness requires the teacher or adult to try to put himself or herself in the place of the child in the classroom. It means asking questions, such as:

- What would make the environment comfortable for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarteners, early school-age children, or children with ability differences?
- What kind of adult support would be appropriate?
- What is planned to encourage parent participation?
- What is being done to develop a child's sense of trust, sense of self, and feeling of control over the environment?
- What should be happening to encourage positive self-concept development?
- What would I see if I were at the child's level?
- What kind of activities, supplies, and materials should be available?
- What is occurring to support a child's need for privacy or "alone time"?

In answering these questions, take into account what is known about how young children develop and learn, and match that to the content and strategies they encounter in early education programs. Being reflective and carefully listening to what children have to say is also important. As we continue through this book, the activities discussed in all curriculum areas will be developmentally appropriate, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of *all* children.

It is important to include opportunities for interacting with the child's family as well. Communication between home and school offers consistent and beneficial experiences for young children and their families.

Gestwicki (2015) says it clearly:

> "Developmentally appropriate practice does not approach children as if they were equal members of an age grouping, but as unique individuals… This knowledge [of specific uniqueness] primarily comes through relating and interacting with children and also their parents, who are important resources of knowledge about their children. Developmentally appropriate practice is based on parents' active involvement both as resources of knowledge and as decision makers about what is developmentally appropriate for their children."

By observing young children, gathering data about who they are, and developing awareness of their strengths, interests, and needs, you are starting to build a child-centered curriculum. You will discover that children benefit from being treated as individuals while being part of a class community. For curriculum and environments to be developmentally appropriate, they must be individually appropriate. We will study observation, assessment strategies, and evaluation of curriculum and environments in the ensuing chapters of this book.

Social and Cultural Contexts

DAP

Early childhood educators recognize the importance of cultural context in the development and learning of young children. Growing up as members of a family and community, children learn the rules of their culture—explicitly through direct teaching and implicitly through the behavior of those around them (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009). "Rules of development are the same for all children, but social contexts shape children's development into different configurations" (Bowman, 1994, pp. 218–225). To affirm these differences and similarities, an early education environment should encourage the exploration of gender, racial, and cultural identity, developmental abilities, and disabilities.

The ability to go beyond one's own sociocultural background to ensure equal and fair teaching and learning experiences for all is known as culturally appropriate practice.This expands DAP to address cultural influences that emphasize the adult's ability to develop a multiethnic perspective. To eliminate **bias**—any attitude, belief, or feeling that results in unfair treatment of an individual or group of individuals—and to create an **anti-bias** atmosphere, you need to actively challenge prejudice and stereotyping. **Prejudice** is an attitude, opinion, or idea that is preconceived or decided, usually unfavorably. **Stereotype** is an oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race, or sex, often with negative implications (Derman-Sparks and A.B.C. Task Force, 2012).

Literature by de Melendez and Beck (2012) explains further:

> "The Derman-Sparks antibias model presents and addresses cultural diversity content with an emphasis on promoting fairness and equality. It also refrains from using a tourist-like approach curriculum where the child 'visits' a culture and usually learns about its more exotic details. Such curricula only offer glimpses of cultures contributing little to development of awareness and knowledge about the daily life and problems people face in other cultures."

The curriculum goals for an anti-bias approach are:
Every child will be able to:

- Construct a knowledgeable, confident self-identity.
- Develop comfortable, empathetic, and just interaction with diversity.
- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Develop the skills for standing up for oneself and others in the fact of injustice.

(Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force (2010))

Early education classrooms today include children with learning, behavioral, or physical disabilities as well as those with multiple and diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Each child needs to be appreciated by the teacher and other significant adults. He or she needs to experience an environment that reflects back to the child an awareness of and appreciation for his or her individual and cultural differences. The results of these positive influences will stay with the child for a lifetime (de Melendez and Beck, 2013).

bias: Any attitude, belief, or feeling that results in unfair treatment of an individual or group of individuals.

anti-bias: An attitude that actively challenges prejudice, stereotyping, and unfair treatment of an individual or group of individuals.

prejudice: An attitude, opinion, or idea that is preconceived or decided, usually unfavorably.

stereotype: An oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race, or sex, often with negative implications.

play: A behavior that is self-motivated, freely chosen, process-oriented, and enjoyable.

Importance of Play

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Play is at the core of developmentally appropriate practice. **Play**—a behavior that is self-motivated, freely chosen, process oriented, and enjoyable—is a natural activity for children. It allows them the opportunity to create, invent, discover, and learn about their world. It provides children joy and understanding of themselves and others.

Reflect On This

What happens if children aren't allowed to play?

Research has shown that children's play is present in every human society and the adults in all cultures support play with the manufacture of play toys and equipment. But play is different between cultures based on social and economic circumstances and attitudes about childhood and play. Children's rights and opportunities for play are seen to be constrained within some societies depending on stressors related to contemporary life, separation from nature and an increased view within educational circles that "more and earlier is better" (Whitebread, 2012).

Free, spontaneous, and self-initiated play was once the norm for young children. This is no longer the case. Both parents and early childhood educators, who once encouraged young children to choose their own activities, are being pressured to replace them with adult-directed games, sports, and academic instruction. When children have the opportunity to engage in true play, they are learning to consider options and make choices. The question then becomes, "Why are we trying to teach the elementary curriculum at the early childhood level?"

Children coming to early childhood programs and schools today typically have little time or opportunity to engage in informal play. Jambor stated:

> "This situation is the result of concerns of neighborhood violence, changing family structures, elimination of recess due to academic pressures, increased vehicle traffic, squeezed residential play space, unsafe and unchallenging playgrounds, and an increase in sedentary lifestyle brought on by TV, videos, and, most recently, computers (2000, p. 308)."

Now we can add video games, iPods, cell phones, and other new devices to the mix.

With less time and opportunity for children to play, it is crucial for those of us in early childhood education to keep focused on what we can do to encourage and support play in our daily programs. As with all aspects of early childhood growth and development, young children go through a series of stages in the development of play. Each new experience offers opportunities for play exploration. Some types of play are characteristic of children at identifiable stages, but children can use many of these stages in varying degrees of sophistication as they get older. (See **Box 1-1**.)

Developmental Stages of Play

Children's observable behaviors that reflect social development and participation in play were first identified by Mildred Parten in 1932. She provided this landmark study that is still considered valid today (Essa, 2013; Gestwicki, 2014; Miller and Almon, 2009; Sluss, 2005). These stages of social play are described as follows.

Unoccupied Behavior

Unoccupied behavior usually occurs during infancy and early toddlerhood. A child occupies himself or herself by watching anything of momentary interest. Sometimes the child may not appear to be playing at all.

unoccupied behavior: Refers to a child (infant or toddler) who occupies himself by watching anything of momentary interest.

BOX 1-1: Why Play Is Important

Play	Inspires	Imagination
Imagination	Inspires	Creativity
Creativity	Inspires	Exploration
Exploration	Inspires	Discovery
Discovery	Inspires	Solving Problems
Solving Problems	Inspires	New Skills
New Skills	Inspires	Self-Confidence
Self-Confidence	inspires	Sense of Security
Sense of Security	inspires	More Play

Onlooker Play

Onlooker play is sometimes observed in young toddlers or in children introduced to new situations. This play focuses on the activity rather than the environment. Onlookers place themselves within speaking distance of the activity. Although passive, they are alert to the action around them.

Solitary Play

Solitary play surfaces first for a toddler. The child actually engages in play activity alone at home but is within "earshot" of mother or another adult. In an early education setting, the child plays independently without regard to what other children are doing.

Parallel Play

Parallel play can be observed in the older toddler and young 3-year-olds. A child this age is playing for the sake of playing. This child is within "earshot" and sight of another child and can be playing with the same toy but in a different way. Parallel play is the early stage of peer interaction, but the focus is on the object rather than another child.

Associative Play

Associative play finds the 3- and 4-year-old playing with other children in a group, but he or she drops in and out of play with minimal organization of activity. Two or three children use the same equipment and participate in the same activity, but each in his or her own way.

Cooperative Play

Cooperative play is organized for some purpose by the 4-year-old and older child. This type of play requires group membership and reflects a child's growing capacity to accept and respond to ideas and actions not originally his own. Group play (social play) is the basis for ongoing relationships with people and requires sharing of things and ideas, organizing games and activities, and making friends.

Another aspect of cooperative play is the emphasis on peers and moving away from the importance of adults in the life of a child. The 6- to 8-year-old extends cooperative and symbolic play to include detailed planning and rule making. Leadership roles begin to emerge as play becomes serious.

Theorists and Play

Erik Erikson (1963) emphasized the importance of play in helping children to develop cooperative relationships and gain mutual trust. He believed that children develop their "self-esteem and sense of empowerment by allowing them mastery of objects" (Tsao, 2002, p. 230). Play can also build ego. It fosters the development of physical and social skills that build a child's self-esteem.

According to the theory of Jean Piaget (1961), play provides opportunities for many types of learning in young children, with emphasis on developing representational language and thought. Piaget calls play during the first two years of life **practice play or sensorimotor play**, the stage in cognitive development during which the young child learns through repetitive sensory and motor play activities, also known as functional play.

In the beginning of Piaget's preoperational stage around the ages of two to four or five, **symbolic play** or **dramatic play** become observable in a young child by the way he or she spontaneously uses objects, images, and language. The use of the environment represents what is important to the child at that moment. This type of imaginative play allows the child to imitate realities of people, places, and events within his or her experiences, such as pretending to sleep while patting the baby doll to sleep, drinking "coffee" from an empty cup, and talking to imaginary friends. These imaginary friends allow children to work through anxieties in times of stress or change. In addition, symbolic play and language give children an outlet to practice new physical and mental activities for dealing with the world, such as practicing acceptable behaviors that they see around them so that they can act appropriately in different situations (Krissansen, 2002; Tsao, 2002). Superhero fantasy play is considered a type of symbolic play for a child. (Chapter 7 discusses dramatic play for young children in greater depth.)

onlooker play: The play of young children introduced to new situations that focuses on an activity rather than the environment.

solitary play: Independent play behavior of a child without regard to what other children or adults are doing.

parallel play: Observable play in the older toddler and young 3-year-olds that emphasizes being near another child while playing with an object rather than playing with a child.

associative play: An activity of a 3- or 4-year-old child playing with other children in a group; the child drops in and out of play with minimal organization of activity.

cooperative play: A type of play organized for some purpose by the 4-year-old and older child. It requires group membership and reflects a child's growing capacity to accept and respond to ideas and actions not originally his own.

practice play or sensorimotor play: The stage in cognitive development during which the young child learns through repetitive sensory and motor play activities.

symbolic play: A type of play that allows the child to transfer objects into symbols (things that represent something else) and images into people, places, and events within his experiences. Symbolic play occurs during Piaget's preoperational stage (2 to 7 years). Superhero fantasy play is considered a type of symbolic play for a young child.

dramatic play: Also known as symbolic play.

Piaget's third stage of play, ages 5 to 11, is characterized by games with rules. The roles of the children are clearly defined, the rules of the game are clear-cut, and behavior imitates reality (Sluss, 2005). With increased maturity, children arrive at a complete understanding of rules in both behavior and thought.

Lev Vygotsky's theory (1978) states that social experiences shape children's way of thinking and that social play offers children a way to interpret the world by focusing on rules that underlie all play activities and social interactions. Early imaginative situations created by very young children include social rules, although these rules are not laid down prior to participating in the situations. Supportive guidance scaffolds children's learning, which is required to move children to higher levels of cognitive development.

> "Psychological research has established that there are five fundamental types of human play, commonly referred to as physical play, play with objects, symbolic play, pretend or sociodramatic play, and games with rules. Each supports a range of cognitive and emotional developments, and a good balance of play experience is regarded as a healthy play diet for children. Some types of play are more fully researched than others and much remains to be understood concerning the underlying psychological processes involved (Whitebread, 2012)."

Play also provides children with important insights into themselves and the communities in which they live.

Fostering Play

Teachers have a responsibility to help children develop in their use of play. Play, particularly in preschool and kindergarten, needs to be an integral part of the educational process. Play is neurologically important. Scientific studies of the brain have shown that stress-free, fatigue-free, and anxiety-free environments foster neurological pathways. Play-based activities make connections, combine materials, repeat actions, take risks, extend skills, and create electrical impulses that help make connections and interconnections between neural networks. These connections extend children's capabilities as thinkers, communicators, and learners. Also, we should convey to parents the importance of play in the lives of young children. Play can be a valuable means of gauging a child's developmental progress. This information, in turn, can be communicated to parents. Other teacher responsibilities are to:

- Be aware of current research and resources that validate the importance of play.
- Create a positive and safe place for play.
- Provide open-ended play materials.
- Respect and encourage individual differences in play abilities.
- Have patience with children and give them time to learn new play skills.
- Introduce activities and materials appropriate for each child's age and stage of development.
- Take a sincere interest in learning discoveries.
- Provide a play environment that reflects attitudes and values of the surrounding culture.
- Offer appropriate props from a child's culture that will help him make connections as he plays.
- Make available culturally diverse materials for all the children to enjoy and learn from as they play.
- Encourage cooperation.
- Allow children time without scheduled or externally focused activity. This offers an opportunity for children to be internally focused so that imagination and creativity can take over.

- Take time to listen to children as they play and to observe how each child plays, what he plays with, who he plays with, and what the child *can* do.

It is also important to know the roles that teachers serve in children's play. These include (Jones and Reynolds, 2011):

- *Assessor:* builds on each child's strengths;
- *Mediator:* keeps play safe, teaches conflict resolution skills and solves problems to sustain play;
- *Planner:* pays careful attention to play to plan and support children's engagement and competence;
- *Player:* moves in and out of play to model, mediate, and encourage children to elaborate on their play;
- *Scribe:* represents children's play to help them communicate their ideas; and
- *Stage manager:* clarifies what is important and not important in the play, provides props and enough time for play.

The Association for Childhood Education International's (ACEI) position paper, "Play: Essential for All Children," sounds "A Call to Action" (2002). (See **Box 1-2.**)

Childhood play has a key role in the development of self and identity. Understanding this, you can help the children in your care develop to their fullest potential. As you continue through the chapters of this text, you will find specific examples of how curriculum planning and implementation influence and strengthen childhood play.

Elkind (cited in Koralek, 2004, p. 41) explains further:

> "As teachers of young children, we need to resist the pressures to transform play into work—into academic instruction. We encourage true play by making certain that we offer materials that leave room for the imagination—blocks, paints, paper to be cut and pasted—and that children have sufficient time to innovate with these materials. When we read to young children, we can ask them to make up their own stories or to give a different ending to the story they are hearing. Most of all we need to adopt a playful attitude that will encourage our children to do the same."

BOX 1-2: A Call to Action

ACEI believes that all educators, parents, and policy makers must take the lead in articulating the need for play experiences in children's lives, including the curriculum. To assume strong advocacy roles, it is imperative that all educators, parents, and policy makers who work with or for children from infancy through adolescence fully understand play and its diverse forms. Equally important is the ability to use that knowledge to achieve what is best for children in all settings. This paper has argued strongly for legitimizing play as an appropriate activity in schools and other educational settings. Therefore, educators, families, and policy makers can and should:

- Optimize brain functions by providing rich experiences that include a variety of learning materials, feedback, appropriate levels of challenge, and enough time to process information.
- Rethink and transform the nature of relationships and communication between adults and children.
- Make play a fundamental part of every school curriculum.
- Recognize, respect, and accept play in all its variations as worthwhile and valuable.
- Balance work and play to ensure that children reap the benefits of intrinsic motivation and experience sheer joy in their endeavors.
- Balance encouragement and opportunity to fulfill children's natural tendency and need to play; children will find the means to play if the environment affords an opportunity to do so.
- Create a climate of acceptance by respecting children's play choices, recognizing the cultural context in which play occurs, and providing many play options.

Communication with Families

As previously discussed in this chapter, it is the teacher's responsibility to keep the lines of communication open to families. It is the family's responsibility to be involved with their child's teacher and child care center or school. The following guidelines for DAP, which offer suggestions on how teachers can work in partnership with families and communities, are adapted from Copple and Bredekamp (2009) and Gestwicki (2014).

1. Success in the education of young children must be built on a foundation of teamwork involving both teachers and families. It is not the teacher telling the parent what needs to be accomplished. It is both teachers and family members cooperatively sharing knowledge and beliefs about educating children and developing common goals. These partnerships enrich relationships with children and bring together the expertise of both teachers and families for the benefit of the children. (See **Figure 1-10**.)
2. Families are the primary educators of their own children. It is imperative that teachers respect that crucial role by maintaining open communication with families, learning from them, and involving them in the education process.
3. There is a learning process that teachers and families always face in the educational experience. The teacher is learning from the children and their families about the children's world apart from the early childhood setting, while family members are developing knowledge about the principles and techniques of early childhood education. Both are necessary and important. With increased communication, mutual respect emerges.
4. Assessing the child's needs and progress must take into account the child's culture and environment. A teacher's failure to do so is likely to create a breakdown in the educational process.
5. A teacher is prepared to meet the special needs of individual children, including those with disabilities.
6. The early childhood teacher is in a unique position to be an advocate by recognizing the special circumstances of a child and his or her family and to help link up with whatever community resources are available and appropriate for helping them.

Figure 1-10 Encourage parents to share with you what they know about their children and what is important to them as parents.

Positive communication between home and school is crucial to providing a consistent and beneficial experience for young children. "Just as the teacher deals with each child as a unique individual by employing a variety of teaching guidance methods, so must a flexible approach be maintained in communicating with families to meet their individual requirements" (Essa, 2011, p. 72).

Children tend to see connections between school and home when their parents are involved. Children's positive attitudes increase when families are involved in the school which increases children's homework habits and attendance. In the busy and complex lives of parents and teachers alike, this connection between home and school is more important today than ever before.

Teachers and other staff members in early childhood settings should be responsive to cultural and language differences of the children and their families. Affirming and supporting diversity includes being perceptive about differences in caregiving, feeding, and other practices (Wortham, 2010).

Here are some additional suggestions for active communication with parents:

- Provide an infant daily report (see **Box 1-3**).
- Provide a toddler daily or weekly report (see **Box 1-4**).
- Create bulletin boards with information regarding health and safety issues, family meetings, guest speakers, community resources and referrals, and tips for parents.

BOX 1-3: Infant Daily Report

(Morning input from parents to teachers.)

My Name: _____ Date: _____

When I last ate: _____ Food: _____ Formula/Milk: _____

Time I woke up today: _____ Time I went to bed last night: _____ Hours slept: _____

Last diaper change: _____ Medication: Yes ___ No ___ (must sign in)

How I feel today: (circle one) Great! OK Fussy Not well Feverish Upset tummy

Teething Diaper rash

Today, my teachers should know: _____

(Teachers, input to parents at end of infant's day)

Feedings: (Time & Description/Amount)	Naps: (Time Slept) (Time)	Changes: (My Diaper D W BM)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

My day at school:

Supply needs: (circle one) Clothes Diapers Formula Food Wipes Other:

COMMENTS:

BOX 1-4: Toddler Daily Report

Child's Name : _____ Date: _____ Teacher: _____

Morning input from parents to teachers:

(*Note:* Weekly menu is posted on parent bulletin board.)

MORNING SNACK:	Child Ate:	well ( )	fair ( )
LUNCH:	Child Ate:	well ( )	fair ( )
AFTERNOON SNACK:	Child Ate:	well ( )	fair ( )

NAP: _____

DIAPER CHANGES: TOILET USE:

ACTIVITIES:

ITEMS NEEDED FROM HOME:

COMMENTS:

- Provide family letters, e-mails, newsletters, on-line surveys, and web pages discussing the goals, objectives, themes, and classroom activities. Offer suggestions for activities families can do with children at home to extend or emphasize classroom experience.
- Encourage families to share with you what they know about their children and what is important to them as parents.
- Encourage families to visit the classroom. They should be as welcome as their child.
- Conduct parent-teacher conferences that focus on the accomplishments and needs of the individual child and that ensure privacy and confidentiality for the family.
- Provide multilingual written communications as needed.
- Provide opportunities for families to volunteer.
- Provide advisory committee meetings, trainings and family meeting.

Summary

1. **Analyze the importance of historical information and theories to the field of early childhood education.** Many influences, such as historical aspects of early childhood education, developmental theories, insightful educators, developmentally appropriate practices, and ongoing research have impacted and continue to impact our understanding of what is appropriate for the young children in our care. From them we learn that an early childhood program should be based on fulfilling the developmental needs of all children. It should be planned to meet each child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Understanding the interrelationships among development, learning, and experiences is essential to providing the highest quality care and education for young children.
2. **Identify developmentally appropriate practices as they relate to child development and learning; individual strengths, interests and needs; and social and cultural contexts.** The program should be founded on the assumption that growth is a sequential process, that children pass through stages of development, and that children learn and grow through their play and by actively participating in the

learning experiences offered. It should adapt to the developmental, individual, and cultural differences of the children.

3. **Discuss the importance of play in the lives of young children, describe the developmental stages of play, and identify ways teachers foster play.** As teachers, we need to offer age, individually, and creatively appropriate experiences and activities for each child. We should assist each child in growing to his or her fullest potential by recognizing each stage of development; by providing an environment that encourages the success of each child; by respecting the culture, language, and special needs of each child; and by welcoming family participation in the program.
4. **Explain the value of and techniques for communicating with families.** As we plan for children and their families, we are saying: "Welcome! This environment is safe and appropriate. We care, we will listen, we will share, and we will nurture you and recognize your uniqueness."

Reflective Review Questions

1. If you are going to explain what you do in a classroom to families, colleagues, and administrators, then you need to have knowledge about the contributions of early childhood education history and theorists to the profession. Think about how this information gives you the confidence to express that what you know is based on hundreds of years of experience and research.
2. Why is the term *developmentally appropriate practice* a key concept that every person involved in early childhood should learn about, and how would you explain the concept to someone outside the early education field?
3. What are the distinguishing characteristics of Erik Erikson's *psychosocial theory*, Jean Piaget's *cognitive development theory*, Lev Vygotsky's *sociocultural theory*, and Howard Gardner's *Multiple Intelligences theory*?
4. David Elkind (2002, p. 41) said, "Free, spontaneous, and self initiated play was once the norm for young children. This is no longer the case. . . ." Think back to your childhood. How did you play as a young child? Why was playing important to you? Using the ideas from your reflective thinking about your childhood and the information from this chapter, do you think the nature of play and the opportunity for play has changed? In what way or ways has it changed? If you think play has changed, what might be some explanations for those changes?

Explorations

1. The number of early childhood programs has increased in response to the growing need for out-of-home care and education during the early years. Identify and discuss the indicators of the current need for child care and education, including changing lifestyles and family patterns. How is your local community responding to these needs of young children and their families? Give specific examples.
2. Describe what is meant by developmentally appropriate practice. Then, identify and describe at least three specific examples from your experiences and observations of young children that illustrate developmentally appropriate practice. In addition, it is important for you to read through NAEYC's updated *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*, 3rd edition, by Copple and Bredekamp (2009), to note the major areas discussed. Share this assignment with your classmates.
3. It is common to hear a comment about a young child such as, "Oh, he's just playing." The implication is that what he's doing is not important. From what you have learned about the developmental stages of play and from Parten, Erikson, and Piaget's theories

about the function of play for children, what is incorrect about this type of comment? Why do you think people tend to undervalue play?

4. Select a group of toddlers or kindergarten children. Observe them at play in their classroom and in their outdoor environment. Using the information on *play* in this chapter, describe what activities the children were involved in and what developmental stages of play you observed. How did the teacher plan for the children's play activities? Was it child-directed or teacher-directed play? Would you change anything if you were the teacher? Explain.
5. Visit an early childhood program. Select a classroom and look at its daily schedule and the routines within the schedule. Obtain a copy, if possible. Are the schedule and routines developmentally appropriate? Do they consider the needs of all the children? Explain your answers. Did the teacher follow the posted schedule and routines? What was changed and why? Would you change anything? Why or why not?

2 Observation and Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Compare uses or purposes for observation and assessment.
- Describe the process of observation and assessment, including various types of observations and assessments and guidelines for assessment.
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of authentic assessment.
- Analyze the relationship between assessment and curriculum planning.

Standards Covered in This Chapter

- NAEYC 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d
- DAP 4
- INTASC 6, 7
- CEC DCC C12, C14, C19

Curriculum and assessment drive our work with young children every day. If we do them well, we achieve positive outcomes for children. . . . We must also be careful not to confuse the role of ongoing assessment to support learning with assessment as part of program evaluation. The first uses information to guide decisions about each child's learning, while the second uses data to improve the program and prepare reports. . . . A comprehensive curriculum linked to a systematic assessment system leads to positive outcomes for children (Dodge and Bickhart, 2003, pp. 28–32).

Daily, teachers and directors make decisions related to the children they educate, the facility in which they work, and the curriculum they use. These decisions cannot be made without a firm understanding of the individual children, the workplace, and what their goals guide them to teach and how. To make these decisions, planning is required. A part of this planning process involves observation and assessment of each of these components.

Purposes of Observation and Assessment

INTASC NAEYC

The purposes of assessment include providing information to stakeholders about expectations, helping teachers in planning instruction, helping administrators in improving programs, identifying children who may require special interventions, and providing information for program accountability. Meaningful assessment strategies include collecting data by observing children in a natural setting, using criteria that can assess children from birth to age eight at all ability levels, and categorizing observation results by curriculum content areas and developmental domains. Technical requirements of a meaningful assessment system are that it provides data on individual children that can be aggregated at the classroom program levels, provides descriptive statistics and gain scores, and is available in computerized and paper formats.

Teachers need to have a clear understanding of the purposes and benefits of observation and assessment to identify a child's current competency levels. We rely on observation of skills the child has mastered, which then informs our future planning. For children experiencing difficulties, we use the data to support early identification and referral for specific difficulties and the introduction of appropriate intervention strategies. The observation and assessment processes can also be used to identify the effectiveness of the environment, specific areas of the curriculum, specific activities, and the teaching strategies used. None of these can take place without prior observation and assessment of the current situation (www.sagepub.com/upm-data/9656_022816Ch5.pdf).

Reflect On This

Which is the best way to get valid information on children and their learning—standardized tests or authentic assessment?

Child Outcomes

child outcome: What happens as a result of services provided to children and that are measured by the attainment of different child development milestones or skills.

Before we start to plan for learning, we must first have a clear understanding of each individual child in your care. An *outcome* is defined as a benefit experienced as a result of services and supports received. Thus, a **child outcome** is what happens as a result of services provided to children. Child outcomes are measured by the attainment of different child development milestones or skills. To measure outcomes, teachers collect observational data on children's work in the areas of language and literacy, early math, social development, self-help, nature, science, and so on, and enter the information into a computer or log it onto a form.

Data are collected at the beginning of the year to document skills the children have at entry. Teachers update the information as the year progresses and then enter data at the end of the year. This type of system gives teachers, parents, and administrators a comprehensive picture of the progress children are making over time in their early childhood program. Finding out what a child knows and is able to do helps teachers plan new experiences to advance learning.

Environment

The environment includes the organization of the space and furnishings, predictable daily routines, and responsive interactions between teachers and children. Although distinct, the interconnection of these components is critical for promoting effective teaching. Successful teachers know that the arrangement and management of the early childhood classroom have direct effects on the kinds of behaviors children exhibit as they live and work together.

The components of the physical space in an early childhood classroom include: traffic patterns, materials placed at the children's level, organized storage, adequate equipment and supplies, clearly delineated functional areas, coordinated placement of centers, small-group and independent work areas, and large-group areas. Infant and toddler environments will look different from environments for preschool, whereas primary environments will be planned differently and based on the program goals and developmental needs of the children served, but these basic components will be present in some fashion.

Classroom furniture should be child-sized, and labels and objects placed strategically where children can read them. The classroom should be clean, well maintained, interesting, and attractive. The classroom should be colorful and well lit and should consist primarily of examples of children's and teacher's work displayed at the child's eye level and when possible, supplemented with culturally and linguistically diverse posters, pictures, and books, depicting real people of differing abilities (*Revised Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines,* 2008; https://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/Intro-TX-PreK-Guidelines-2008/index.htm).

Curriculum

The **curriculum** is the planned interaction of children with instructional content, materials, resources, and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. The curriculum outlines the skills, performances, attitudes, and values children are expected to learn. It includes statements of desired child outcomes, descriptions of materials, and the planned sequence that will be used to help children attain the outcomes.

According to the *Curriculum Review Cycle*, teachers need a systematic review cycle to ensure effective teaching and learning in every program. Four essential questions guide the review cycle:

- "What do children know and be able to do?
- How do you know that children have learned?
- What will we do when they haven't learned?
- What will we do when they already know it or can do it?

Curriculum review is a continuous process with adjustments made as necessary" (Seekonk Public Schools, *Curriculum Review Cycle,* 2009).

curriculum: The planned interaction of children with instructional content, materials, resources, and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives.

observation: The process for taking in information and objectively interpreting it for meaning.

Plan of Observation and Assessment

Observation

Observation is the process for taking in information and objectively interpreting it for meaning. Watching children is not the same as observing them. Only by observing children can we truly understand them. We observe a child in order to understand the true nature of the child (see **Figure 2-1**).